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# READINGS IN ENGLISH PROSE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

EDITED BY

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IN READING  
THE PROSE OF THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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## PREFACE

THE great Doctor Johnson, in one of the essays reprinted in this volume, condemns the multiplication of books undertaken by those who "have often no other task than to lay two books before them out of which they compile a third, without any new materials of their own." But if it be supposed on this ground that he would frown on the present undertaking, one might plead his own admission that there is an occasional compiler who, "though he exerts no great abilities in the work, facilitates the progress of others" and makes "that easy of attainment which is already written." Here, at any rate, are suggested the origin and purpose of this collection. For some time it has been possible for those studying periods of English literature to find in single volumes fairly representative selections from the poets of the several ages; but to represent prose writings adequately is much more difficult, and those who have met this problem have found it one involving no little trouble and expense. Through the coöperation of the publishers, who have shown themselves ready to undertake the making of a volume sufficiently generous to accomplish for prose what relatively meagre books will do for poetry, it is hoped that the needs of students of eighteenth-century literature have been sufficiently met. If this hope shall be justified by experience, similar volumes may be undertaken for the earlier and later periods.

The principles governing the choice of selections may be briefly explained. In the first place, it was thought well to represent the half-dozen (more or less) most important prose writers of the century by fairly generous and complete specimens of their work, approximating some twenty to thirty thousand words each. These selections cover, in the experience of the editor, the assignments of prescribed reading set for one or two weeks, in college courses dealing with the century as a whole. The authors thus largely represented are Defoe, Swift, Steele, Addison, Johnson, Boswell, and Burke.

In the second place, it was desired to represent the lesser



writers of the age by briefer specimens of their work, to which students could be referred for the cursory illustration of matters discussed in lectures or text-books. Such are the selections from the philosophers, the epistolarians, the pamphleteers, and the novelists of the century. The last of these groups — the novelists — it was not at first proposed to include at all, since their work in its most important aspects can hardly be represented by extracts. But it was suggested by some of the friends who were good enough to criticise the first draft of the contents of the collection, that the novelists might be represented as prose writers, in perhaps the same proportion that they would occupy in a course dealing with the period as a whole but without special attention to the novel or the drama; and this suggestion has been followed. The selections made from the novelists, then, must not be supposed to exhibit the authors *as novelists*; but they may serve to illustrate the farcical humor of Fielding, the contrasting sentimentalism of Richardson and Sterne, and the romantic machinery of the "tales of terror."

This is as far as the collection need go, for those concerned only with the intrinsic values of literature. But it was desired to go further, and include specimens — sometimes of no considerable literary quality — which are suggestive for what might be called the laboratory study of the history of literature, — passages exemplifying important critical doctrines or literary tendencies of the age. Such are the selections from Dennis, Cibber, the Wartons, and Hurd, the critical chapters from Fielding and the Prefaces of Richardson. In like manner the critical writings of Addison and Johnson have been represented more largely than intrinsic interest might dictate, especially where they touch on poetry which the reader may be presumed to have been studying. The wise teacher or student will surely seek, where it is possible, to make one writer illustrate another, and to find examples of contemporary judgments and aims which will make less mysterious for the modern reader literary fashions of an earlier age. So there is value, not only in Johnson's lastingly sound analyses of the poetry of Dryden and Pope, but also in the characteristic limitations of his appreciation of Milton. And there is real interest, even for those who have no desire to go deeply into literary theory, in

the discussion of poetic justice by Dennis and Addison, in Johnson's final exposure of the fallacy in the doctrine of the unities, in Fielding's penetrating comments on his own art, and in the casual but significant remarks of Cowper and Gray on their work as poets. Those who care to do so may be enabled to go still further into the criticism of the century, making the acquaintance of its efforts in the direction of an æsthetic theory, through the selections from Addison's and Hume's essays on Taste, Reynolds's discussion of Beauty, and Burke's account of the Sublime and Beautiful. A similar attempt has been made to enable the student to illustrate for himself "the spirit of 1789," through the selections from Godwin, Paine, and *The Anti-Jacobin*.

Certain books, from which extracts would otherwise have been a matter of course, have been passed by because they are commonly familiar in more elementary reading: these include the first two parts of *Gulliver's Travels*, *Robinson Crusoe*, the De Coverley papers, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and Burke's writings on the American Revolution. A place has been made for the dubious prose of Macpherson's Ossianic writings, on the purely practical ground that they should be known to the student of the period, but are not represented in any of the standard collections of eighteenth-century poetry.

Complete compositions have of course been preferred, other things being equal, especially from the more important writers. But where actual utility, or exigencies of space, demanded, the editor has freely excerpted, in the manner of one reading aloud under circumstances where it is desirable that the knowledge of the reader should save the time of the hearer. Omissions have been indicated scrupulously, and in most cases it is possible, by noting these indications, to discover whether any selection includes the beginning and the end of the chapter, essay, or letter from which it is taken. There are, however, a very few unnoted omissions *pudoris causa*, to which it seemed unnecessary to call attention in a non-critical text.

The geographical situation of the editor has made it impossible, regrettably, to present a verified text of a considerable number of the selections; in other words, in many cases it has been necessary to depend on the work of previous editors and publishers. In some cases one need have little fear of the re-



sults; in others there is too much reason to suspect that the text must be bettered hereafter, since for several of the writers represented no good modern editing has been accomplished. It has fortunately been possible to give a sound text in certain cases where there has been conspicuous need of one: for example, the text of Defoe's essay on Academies and his *Shortest Way with the Dissenters* has been taken from original sources, and corrects errors which have been multiplied in earlier reprints. Spelling and punctuation have been everywhere modernized.

Footnotes have been supplied according to a principle which cannot be followed with consistency, but which amounts to this: give only such information as may be assumed to be necessary for the apprehending of the general meaning of the text and not to be available in a convenient dictionary. Extended or uncommon quotations from Latin writers, so beloved in our period, have been translated; phrases which should be the property of every cultivated person have not. Perhaps an incidental result of the reading of this book may prove to be some mitigation of the heresy that it is possible to know English literature without understanding the Latin tongue.

And now, if any one may be presumed to have read this Preface thus far, the editor may venture to ask the privilege, after setting forth impartially the words of so many other and better men, to do himself the pleasure of adding two remarks which follow from the repeated reading, in manuscript and proof, of the whole contents of the volume. The first remark is in no way a matter of literature, but tends toward cheerfulness of mind so clearly that it may be justifiable in any connection. Whoever dips far into these eighteenth-century authors will discover that in their age it was believed that men were more eager than in earlier times for the getting and the display of wealth; that the whole world was forsaking the country and making life wretched in cities; that old-fashioned honesty and simplicity of manners were becoming hard to find; that young persons were increasingly disrespectful of their elders; that books and periodicals were being multiplied to an alarming excess; and that church-going, with other practices of the Christian religion, was rapidly going out of use. These were some of the characteristic ills of the period. Perhaps, then, when the reader is next told that they are the characteristic ills of the early twentieth



century, he may suspect that they were equally so in the first, the fifth, and the fifteenth, and may derive some consolation thereby.

The second remark, more germane to the purposes of the book, is that the repeated perusal of this corpus of eighteenth-century prose has tended always to increase, on the part of at least one reader, his respect for the person and works of Samuel Johnson. The space here accorded him is by no means due to mere tradition or literary orthodoxy, but to a genuine belief in the lasting worth of what he had to say. Granted certain of his pet foibles, — such as the habit of beginning every composition with a sonorous abstraction that gives no remotest clue to the subject in hand, and his willful unappreciativeness of a republican like Milton or a dilettante like Gray, — and where shall you find one who wrote on almost everything and said so little, whether on attics, morals, or Shakespeare, which is not still true and still important? So let the Preface end with him, as it began; and it is to the memory of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., at once the most sturdy and the most pathetic figure among its contributors, that this book would be dedicated, were it not presumption thus lightly to seek to disturb so venerable a ghost.

R. M. A.





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DANIEL DEFOE  
AN ESSAY UPON PROJECTS  
1697

[This essay, one of Defoe's earliest works, included a History of Projects and separate sections proposing plans for reform of the banking and bankruptcy laws, an insurance system, the development of public roads, the care of idiots, and various academies. The last-named section is here represented by two extracts.]

OF ACADEMIES

WE have in England fewer of these than in any part of the world, at least where learning is in so much esteem. But to make amends, the two great seminaries we have are, without comparison, the greatest — I won't say the best — in the world; and though much might be said here concerning universities in general, and foreign academies in particular, I content myself with noting that part in which we seem defective. The French, who justly value themselves upon erecting the most celebrated Academy of Europe, owe the lustre of it very much to the great encouragement the kings of France have given to it. And one of the members, making a speech at his entrance, tells you that "'tis not the least of the glories of their invincible monarch to have engrossed all the learning of the world in that sublime body."

The peculiar study of the Academy of Paris has been to refine and correct their own language, which they have done to that happy degree that we see it now spoken in all the courts of Christendom as the language allowed to be most universal.

I had the honor once to be a member of a small society who seemed to offer at this noble design in England; but the greatness of the work and the modesty of the gentlemen concerned prevailed with them to desist an enterprise which appeared too great for private hands to undertake. We want indeed a Richelieu to commence such a work; for I am persuaded were there such a genius in our kingdom to lead the way, there would

not want capacities who could carry on the work to a glory equal to all that has gone before them. The English tongue is a subject not at all less worthy the labor of such a society than the French, and capable of a much greater perfection. The learned among the French will own that the comprehensiveness of expression is a glory in which the English tongue not only equals, but excels its neighbors. Rapin, St. Evrémont, and the most eminent French authors have acknowledged it; and my Lord Roscommon, who is allowed to be a good judge of English, because he wrote it as exactly as any ever did, expresses what I mean in these lines:—

For who did ever in French authors see  
The comprehensive English energy?  
The weighty bullion of one sterling line,  
Drawn to French wire, would through whole pages shine.

“And if our neighbors will yield us, as their greatest critic has done, the preference for sublimity and nobleness of style, we will willingly quit all pretensions to their insignificant gaiety.”

’Tis a great pity that a subject so noble should not have some as noble to attempt it; and for a method, what greater can be set before us than the Academy of Paris, which, to give the French their due, stands foremost among all the great attempts in the learned part of the world.

The present King of England, of whom we have seen the whole world writing panegyrics and encomiums, and whom his enemies, when their interest does not silence them, are apt to say more of than ourselves; as in the war he has given surprising instances of a greatness of spirit more than common, so in peace, I dare say, with submission, he shall never have an opportunity to illustrate his memory more than by such a foundation; by which he shall have opportunity to darken the glory of the French King in peace, as he has by his daring attempts in the war.

Nothing but pride loves to be flattered, and that only as ’tis a vice which blinds us to our own imperfections. I think princes are particularly unhappy in having their good actions magnified, as their evil actions covered. But King William, who has already won praise by the steps of dangerous virtue, seems re-

served for some actions which are above the touch of flattery, whose praise is in themselves.

And such would this be; and because I am speaking of a work which seems to be proper only for the hand of the King himself, I shall not presume to carry on this chapter to the model as I have done in other subjects. Only thus far: —

That a society be erected by the King himself, if his Majesty thought fit, and composed of none but persons of the first figure in learning; and 'twere to be wished our gentry were so much lovers of learning that birth might always be joined with capacity.

The work of this society should be to encourage polite learning, to polish and refine the English tongue, and advance the so much neglected faculty of correct language, to establish purity and propriety of style, and to purge it from all the irregular additions that ignorance and affectation have introduced; and all those innovations in speech, if I may call them such, which some dogmatic writers have the confidence to foster upon their native language, as if their authority were sufficient to make their own fancy legitimate.

By such a society I dare say the true glory of our English style would appear, and among all the learned part of the world be esteemed, as it really is, the noblest and most comprehensive of all the vulgar languages in the world.

Into this society should be admitted none but persons eminent for learning, and yet none, or but very few, whose business or trade was learning. For I may be allowed, I suppose, to say we have seen many great scholars, mere learned men, and graduates in the last degree of study, whose English has been far from polite, full of stiffness and affectation, hard words, and long unusual coupling of syllables and sentences, which sound harsh and untunable to the ear, and shock the reader both in expression and understanding.

In short, there should be room in this society for neither clergyman, physician, or lawyer. Not that I would put an affront upon the learning of any of those honorable employments, much less upon their persons. But if I do think that their several professions do naturally and severally prescribe habits of speech to them peculiar to their practice, and prejudicial to the study I speak of, I believe I do them no wrong. Nor do I



deny but there may be, and now are, among some of all those professions, men of style and language, great masters of English, whom few men will undertake to correct; and where such do at any time appear, their extraordinary merit should find them a place in this society; but it should be rare, and upon very extraordinary occasions, that such be admitted.

I would therefore have this society wholly composed of gentlemen, whereof twelve to be of the nobility, if possible, and twelve private gentlemen, and a class of twelve to be left open for mere merit, let it be found in who or what sort it would, which should lie as the crown of their study, who have done something eminent to deserve it. The voice of this society should be sufficient authority for the usage of words, and sufficient also to expose the innovations of other men's fancies; they should preside with a sort of judicature over the learning of the age, and have liberty to correct and censure the exorbitance of writers, especially of translators. The reputation of this society would be enough to make them the allowed judges of style and language; and no author would have the impudence to coin without their authority. Custom, which is now our best authority for words, would always have its original here, and not be allowed without it. There should be no more occasion to search for derivations and constructions, and 'twould be as criminal then to coin words as money.

The exercises of this society would be lectures on the English tongue, essays on the nature, original, usage, authorities, and differences of words, on the propriety, purity, and cadence of style, and of the politeness and manner in writing, reflections upon irregular usages, and corrections of erroneous customs in words; and, in short, everything that would appear necessary to the bringing our English tongue to a due perfection, and our gentlemen to a capacity of writing like themselves; to banish pride and pedantry, and silence the impudence and impertinence of young authors, whose ambition is to be known, though it be by their folly. . . .

Under this head of Academies I might bring in a project for —



## AN ACADEMY FOR WOMEN

I have often thought of it as one of the most barbarous customs in the world, considering us as a civilized and a Christian country, that we deny the advantages of learning to women. We reproach the sex every day with folly and impertinence, while I am confident, had they the advantages of education equal to us, they would be guilty of less than ourselves.

One would wonder, indeed, how it should happen that women are conversible at all, since they are only beholding to natural parts for all their knowledge. Their youth is spent to teach them to stitch and sew or make baubles. They are taught to read, indeed, and perhaps to write their names or so, and that is the height of a woman's education. And I would but ask any who slight the sex for their understanding, what is a man (a gentleman, I mean) good for that is taught no more?

I need not give instances, or examine the character of a gentleman with a good estate, and of a good family, and with tolerable parts, and examine what figure he makes for want of education.

The soul is placed in the body like a rough diamond, and must be polished, or the lustre of it will never appear: and 'tis manifest that as the rational soul distinguishes us from brutes, so education carries on the distinction and makes some less brutish than others. This is too evident to need any demonstration. But why then should women be denied the benefit of instruction? If knowledge and understanding had been useless additions to the sex, God Almighty would never have given them capacities, for He made nothing needless. Besides, I would ask such what they can see in ignorance that they should think it a necessary ornament to a woman? or how much worse is a wise woman than a fool? or what has the woman done to forfeit the privilege of being taught? Does she plague us with her pride and impertinence? Why did we not let her learn, that she might have had more wit? Shall we upbraid women with folly, when 'tis only the error of this inhuman custom that hindered them being made wiser?

The capacities of women are supposed to be greater and their senses quicker than those of the men; and what they might be capable of being bred to is plain from some instances of female

wit, which this age is not without; which upbraids us with injustice, and looks as if we denied women the advantages of education for fear they should vie with the men in their improvements.

To remove this objection, and that women might have at least a needful opportunity of education in all sorts of useful learning, I propose the draught of an Academy for that purpose.

I know 'tis dangerous to make public appearances of the sex. They are not either to be confined or exposed; the first will disagree with their inclinations, and the last with their reputations, and therefore it is somewhat difficult; and I doubt a method proposed by an ingenious lady in a little book called *Advice to the Ladies* would be found impracticable, for, saving my respect to the sex, the levity, which perhaps is a little peculiar to them, at least in their youth, will not bear the restraint; and I am satisfied nothing but the height of bigotry can keep up a nunnery. Women are extravagantly desirous of going to heaven, and will punish their pretty bodies to get thither; but nothing else will do it, and even in that case sometimes it falls out that nature will prevail.

When I talk, therefore, of an academy for women, I mean both the model, the teaching, and the government different from what is proposed by that ingenious lady, for whose proposal I have a very great esteem, and also a great opinion of her wit; different, too, from all sorts of religious confinement, and, above all, from vows of celibacy.

Wherefore the academy I propose should differ but little from public schools, wherein such ladies as were willing to study should have all the advantages of learning suitable to their genius.

But since some severities of discipline more than ordinary would be absolutely necessary to preserve the reputation of the house, that persons of quality and fortune might not be afraid to venture their children thither, I shall venture to make a small scheme by way of essay.

The house I would have built in a form by itself, as well as in a place by itself. The building should be of three plain fronts, without any jettings or bearing-work, that the eye might at a glance see from one coin to the other; the gardens walled in

the same triangular figure, with a large moat, and but one entrance.

When this every part of the situation was contrived as well as might be for discovery, and to render intriguing dangerous, I would have no guards, no eyes, no spies set over the ladies, but shall expect them to be tried by the principles of honor and strict virtue. . . .

In this house, the persons who enter should be taught all sorts of breeding suitable to both their genius and their quality; and in particular music and dancing, which it would be cruelty to bar the sex of, because they are their darlings; but besides this, they should be taught languages, as particularly French and Italian; and I would venture the injury of giving a woman more tongues than one.

They should, as a particular study, be taught all the graces of speech and all the necessary air of conversation, which our common education is so defective in that I need not expose it. They should be brought to read books, and especially history, and so to read as to make them understand the world, and be able to know and judge of things when they hear of them.

To such whose genius would lead them to it I would deny no sort of learning; but the chief thing in general is to cultivate the understandings of the sex, that they may be capable of all sorts of conversation; that, their parts and judgments being improved, they may be as profitable in their conversation as they are pleasant.

Women, in my observation, have little or no difference in them, but as they are or are not distinguished by education. Tempers indeed may in some degree influence them, but the main distinguishing part is their breeding.

The whole sex are generally quick and sharp. I believe I may be allowed to say generally so, for you rarely see them lumpish and heavy when they are children, as boys will often be. If a woman be well bred, and taught the proper management of her natural wit, she proves generally very sensible and retentive; and without partiality, a woman of sense and manners is the finest and most delicate part of God's creation, the glory of her Maker, and the great instance of His singular regard to man, His darling creature, to whom He gave the best gift either God could bestow or man receive. And 'tis the sor-



didest piece of folly and ingratitude in the world to withhold from the sex the due lustre which the advantages of education gives to the natural beauty of their minds.

A woman well bred and well taught, furnished with the additional accomplishments of knowledge and behavior, is a creature without comparison; her society is the emblem of sublimer enjoyments; her person is angelic and her conversation heavenly; she is all softness and sweetness, peace, love, wit, and delight. She is every way suitable to the sublimest wish, and the man that has such a one to his portion has nothing to do but to rejoice in her and be thankful.

On the other hand, suppose her to be the very same woman, and rob her of the benefit of education, and it follows thus: —

If her temper be good, want of education makes her soft and easy. Her wit, for want of teaching, makes her impertinent and talkative. Her knowledge, for want of judgment and experience, makes her fanciful and whimsical. If her temper be bad, want of breeding makes her worse, and she grows haughty, insolent, and loud. If she be passionate, want of manners makes her termagant and a scold, which is much at one with lunatic. If she be proud, want of discretion (which still is breeding) makes her conceited, fantastic, and ridiculous. And from these she degenerates to be turbulent, clangorous, noisy, nasty, and the devil.

Methinks mankind for their own sakes — since, say what we will of the women, we all think fit at one time or other to be concerned with them — should take some care to breed them up to be suitable and serviceable, if they expected no such thing as delight from them. Bless us! what care do we take to breed up a good horse and to break him well! and what a value do we put upon him when it is done, and all because he should be fit for our use! and why not a woman? Since all her ornaments and beauty without suitable behavior is a cheat in nature, like the false tradesman, who puts the best of his goods uppermost, that the buyer may think the rest are of the same goodness.

Beauty of the body, which is the women's glory, seems to be now unequally bestowed, and Nature, or rather Providence, to lie under some scandal about it, as if 'twas given a woman for a snare to men, and so made a kind of a she-devil of her; be-

cause, they say, exquisite beauty is rarely given with wit, more rarely with goodness of temper, and never at all with modesty. And some, pretending to justify the equity of such a distribution, will tell us 'tis the effect of the justice of Providence in dividing particular excellencies among all His creatures, share and share alike, as it were, that all might for something or other be acceptable to one another, else some would be despised.

I think both these notions false, and yet the last, which has the show of respect to Providence, is the worst, for it supposes Providence to be indigent and empty, as if it had not wherewith to furnish all the creatures it had made, but was fain to be parsimonious in its gifts, and distribute them by piecemeal for fear of being exhausted.

If I might venture my opinion against an almost universal notion, I would say most men mistake the proceedings of Providence in this case, and all the world at this day are mistaken in their practice about it. And because the assertion is very bold, I desire to explain myself.

That Almighty First Cause which made us all is certainly the fountain of excellence, as it is of being, and by an invisible influence could have diffused equal qualities and perfections to all the creatures it has made, as the sun does its light, without the least ebb or diminution to Himself, and has given indeed to every individual sufficient to the figure His providence had designed him in the world.

I believe it might be defended if I should say that I do suppose God has given to all mankind equal gifts and capacities in that He has given them all souls equally capable, and that the whole difference in mankind proceeds either from accidental difference in the make of their bodies or from the foolish difference of education.

1. *From Accidental Difference in Bodies.* I would avoid discoursing here of the philosophical position of the soul in the body. But if it be true, as philosophers do affirm, that the understanding and memory is dilated or contracted according to the accidental dimensions of the organ through which 'tis conveyed, then, though God has given a soul as capable to me as another, yet if I have any natural defect in those parts of the body by which the soul should act, I may have the same soul infused as another man, and yet he be a wise man and I a very

fool. For example, if a child naturally have a defect in the organ of hearing, so that he could never distinguish any sound, that child shall never be able to speak or read, though it have a soul capable of all the accomplishments in the world. The brain is the centre of all the soul's actings, where all the distinguishing faculties of it reside; and 'tis observable a man who has a narrow contracted head, in which there is not room for the due and necessary operations of nature by the brain, is never a man of very great judgment; and that proverb, "A great head and little wit," is not meant by nature, but is a reproof upon sloth, as if one should, by way of wonder, say, "Fie, fie! you that have a great head have but little wit; that's strange! that must certainly be your own fault." From this notion I do believe there is a great matter in the breed of men and women — not that wise men shall always get wise children, but I believe strong and healthy bodies have the wisest children, and sickly, weakly bodies affect the wits as well as the bodies of their children. We are easily persuaded to believe this in the breeds of horses, cocks, dogs, and other creatures, and I believe 'tis as visible in men.

But to come closer to the business, the great distinguishing difference which is seen in the world between men and women is in their education, and this is manifested by comparing it with the difference between one man or woman and another.

And herein it is that I take upon me to make such a bold assertion that all the world are mistaken in their practice about women; for I cannot think that God Almighty ever made them so delicate, so glorious creatures, and furnished them with such charms, so agreeable and so delightful to mankind, with souls capable of the same accomplishments with men, and all to be only stewards of our houses, cooks, and slaves.

Not that I am for exalting the female government in the least; but, in short, I would have men take women for companions, and educate them to be fit for it. A woman of sense and breeding will scorn as much to encroach upon the prerogative of the man as a man of sense will scorn to oppress the weakness of the woman. But if the women's souls were refined and improved by teaching, that word would be lost; to say, the *weakness of the sex* as to judgment, would be nonsense, for ignorance and folly would be no more found among women than men.



I remember a passage which I heard from a very fine woman; she had wit and capacity enough, an extraordinary shape and face, and a great fortune, but had been cloistered up all her time, and, for fear of being stolen, had not had the liberty of being taught the common necessary knowledge of women's affairs; and when she came to converse in the world, her natural wit made her so sensible of the want of education, that she gave this short reflection on herself: — "I am ashamed to talk with my very maids," says she, "for I don't know when they do right or wrong. I had more need go to school than be married."

I need not enlarge on the loss the defect of education is to the sex, nor argue the benefit of the contrary practice; 'tis a thing will be more easily granted than remedied. This chapter is but an essay at the thing, and I refer the practice to those happy days, if ever they shall be, when men shall be wise enough to mend it.

## THE SHORTEST WAY WITH THE DISSENTERS

1702

[This pamphlet was written while a bill was pending in Parliament on the subject of "occasional conformity," a practice by which members of the Dissenting denominations preserved their political rights by occasionally attending service at the Church of England. Defoe, a Dissenter, assumed the position of a violent Tory and High Churchman, his mock attack on his fellow-religionists being so skilfully devised that it was taken seriously and approved by some Tories. When its real character was understood, the author was prosecuted for libeling the Church, and the book was ordered burned by the House of Commons.]

SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE tells us a story in his collection of fables, of the cock and the horses. The cock was gotten to roost in the stable among the horses, and there being no racks or other conveniences for him, it seems he was forced to roost upon the ground. The horses jostling about for room, and putting the cock in danger of his life, he gives them this grave advice, "Pray, gentlefolks, let us stand still, for fear we should tread upon one another."

There are some people in the world, who, now they are un-

perched, and reduced to an equality with other people, and under strong and very just apprehensions of being further treated as they deserve, begin, with Æsop's cock, to preach up peace and union, and the Christian duties of moderation, forgetting that, when they had the power in their hands, these graces were strangers in their gates.

It is now near fourteen years that the glory and peace of the purest and most flourishing Church in the world has been eclipsed, buffeted, and disturbed by a sort of men whom God in His providence has suffered to insult over her and bring her down. These have been the days of her humiliation and tribulation. She has borne with invincible patience the reproach of the wicked, and God has at last heard her prayers, and delivered her from the oppression of the stranger.

And now they find their day is over, their power gone, and the throne of this nation possessed by a royal, English, true, and ever constant member of, and friend to, the Church of England. Now they find that they are in danger of the Church of England's just resentments; now they cry out Peace, Union, Forbearance, and Charity, as if the Church had not too long harbored her enemies under her wing, and nourished the viperous brood till they hiss and fly in the face of the mother that cherished them!

No, gentlemen, the time of mercy is past, your day of grace is over; you should have practiced peace, and moderation, and charity, if you expected any yourselves.

We have heard none of this lesson for fourteen years past. We have been huffed and bullied with your Act of Toleration; you have told us that you are the Church established by law, as well as others; have set up your canting synagogues at our church doors, and the Church and members have been loaded with reproaches, with oaths, associations, abjurations, and what not. Where has been the mercy, the forbearance, the charity, you have shown to tender consciences of the Church of England, that could not take oaths as fast as you made them? that, having sworn allegiance to their lawful and rightful King, could not dispense with their oath, their King being still alive, and swear to your new hodge-podge of a Dutch Government? These have been turned out of their livings, and they and their families left to starve; their estates double taxed to carry on a war they had

no hand in, and you got nothing by. What account can you give of the multitudes you have forced to comply, against their consciences, with your new sophistical politics, who, like new converts in France, sin because they cannot starve? And now the tables are turned upon you; you must not be persecuted; it is not a Christian spirit!

You have butchered one king, deposed another king, and made a mock king of a third, and yet you could have the face to expect to be employed and trusted by the fourth. Anybody that did not know the temper of your party would stand amazed at the impudence, as well as folly, to think of it.

Your management of your Dutch monarch, whom you reduced to a mere King of Cl—s, is enough to give any future princes such an idea of your principles as to warn them sufficiently from coming into your clutches; and God be thanked the Queen is out of your hands, knows you, and will have a care of you.

There is no doubt but the supreme authority of a nation has in itself a power, and a right to that power, to execute the laws upon any part of that nation it governs. The execution of the known laws of the land, and that with but a gentle hand neither, was all that the fanatical party of this land have ever called persecution; this they have magnified to a height, that the sufferings of the Huguenots in France were not to be compared with. Now, to execute the known laws of a nation upon those who transgress them, after voluntarily consenting to the making those laws, can never be called persecution, but justice. But justice is always violence to the party offending, for every man is innocent in his own eyes. The first execution of the laws against Dissenters in England was in the days of King James the First; and what did it amount to? Truly the worst they suffered was at their own request: to let them go to New England and erect a new colony, and give them great privileges, grants, and suitable powers, keep them under protection, and defend them against all invaders, and receive no taxes or revenue from them. This was the cruelty of the Church of England. Fatal lenity! It was the ruin of that excellent prince, King Charles the First. Had King James sent all the Puritans in England away to the West Indies, we had been a national, unmixed Church; the Church of England had been kept undivided and entire.



To requite the lenity of the father, they take up arms against the son; conquer, pursue, take, imprison, and at last put to death the anointed of God, and destroy the very being and nature of government, setting up a sordid impostor, who had neither title to govern nor understanding to manage, but supplied that want with power, bloody and desperate counsels, and craft without conscience.

Had not King James the First withheld the full execution of the laws, had he given them strict justice, he had cleared the nation of them, and the consequences had been plain: his son had never been murdered by them nor the monarchy overwhelmed. It was too much mercy shown them was the ruin of his posterity and the ruin of the nation's peace. One would think the Dissenters should not have the face to believe that we are to be wheedled and canted into peace and toleration, when they know that they have once requited us with a civil war, and once with an intolerable and unrighteous persecution, for our former civility.

Nay, to encourage us to be easy with them, it is apparent that they never had the upper hand of the Church, but they treated her with all the severity, with all the reproach and contempt as was possible. What peace and what mercy did they show the loyal gentry of the Church of England in the time of their triumphant Commonwealth? How did they put all the gentry of England to ransom, whether they were actually in arms for the King or not, making people compound for their estates and starve their families? How did they treat the clergy of the Church of England, sequestered the ministers, devoured the patrimony of the Church, and divided the spoil by sharing the Church lands among their soldiers, and turning her clergy out to starve? Just such measure as they have meted should be measured them again.

Charity and love is the known doctrine of the Church of England, and it is plain she has put it in practice towards the Dissenters, even beyond what they ought, till she has been wanting to herself, and in effect unkind to her sons, particularly in the too much lenity of King James the First, mentioned before. Had he so rooted the Puritans from the face of the land, which he had an opportunity early to have done, they had not had the power to vex the Church as since they have done.

In the days of King Charles the Second, how did the Church reward their bloody doings with lenity and mercy, except the barbarous regicides of the pretended court of justice! Not a soul suffered for all the blood in an unnatural war. King Charles came in all mercy and love, cherished them, preferred them, employed them, withheld the rigor of the law, and oftentimes, even against the advice of his Parliament, gave them liberty of conscience; and how did they requite him with the villainous contrivance to depose and murder him and his successor at the Rye Plot!

King James, as if mercy was the inherent quality of the family, began his reign with unusual favor to them. Nor could their joining with the Duke of Monmouth against him move him to do himself justice upon them; but that mistaken prince thought to win them by gentleness and love, proclaimed an universal liberty to them, and rather discountenanced the Church of England than them. How they requited him all the world knows.

The late reign is too fresh in the memory of all the world to need a comment; how, under pretence of joining with the Church in redressing some grievances, they pushed things to that extremity, in conjunction with some mistaken gentlemen, as to depose the late King, as if the grievance of the nation could not have been redressed but by the absolute ruin of the prince. Here is an instance of their temper, their peace, and charity. To what height they carried themselves during the reign of a king of their own; how they crope into all places of trust and profit; how they insinuated into the favor of the King, and were at first preferred to the highest places in the nation; how they engrossed the ministry, and above all, how pitifully they managed, is too plain to need any remarks.

But particularly their mercy and charity, the spirit of union, they tell us so much of, has been remarkable in Scotland. If any man would see the spirit of a Dissenter, let him look into Scotland. There they made entire conquest of the Church, trampled down the sacred orders, and suppressed the Episcopal government, with an absolute, and, as they suppose, irretrievable victory, though it is possible they may find themselves mistaken. Now it would be a very proper question to ask their impudent advocate, the *Observer*, Pray how much mercy

and favor did the members of the Episcopal Church find in Scotland from the Scotch Presbyterian Government? And I shall undertake for the Church of England that the Dissenters shall still receive as much here, though they deserve but little.

In a small treatise of the sufferings of the Episcopal clergy in Scotland, it will appear what usage they met with; how they not only lost their livings, but in several places were plundered and abused in their persons; the ministers that could not conform turned out with numerous families and no maintenance, and hardly charity enough left to relieve them with a bit of bread. And the cruelties of the parties are innumerable, and not to be attempted in this short piece.

And now, to prevent the distant cloud which they perceived to hang over their heads from England, with a true Presbyterian policy, they put in for a union of nations, that England might unite their Church with the Kirk of Scotland, and their Presbyterian members sit in our House of Commons, and their Assembly of Scotch canting Long-Cloaks in our Convocation. What might have been if our fanatic Whiggish statesmen continued, God only knows; but we hope we are out of fear of that now.

It is alleged by some of the faction — and they began to bully us with it — that if we won't unite with them, they will not settle the crown with us again, but when Her Majesty dies, will choose a king for themselves.

If they won't, we must make them, and it is not the first time we have let them know that we are able. The crowns of these kingdoms have not so far disowned the right of succession, but they may retrieve it again; and if Scotland thinks to come off from a successive to an elective state of government, England has not promised not to assist the right heir and put them into possession, without any regard to their ridiculous settlements.

These are the gentlemen, these their ways of treating the Church, both at home and abroad. Now let us examine the reasons they pretend to give why we should be favorable to them, why we should continue and tolerate them among us.

First, they are very numerous, they say; they are a great part of the nation, and we cannot suppress them.

To this may be answered: —

1. They are not so numerous as the Protestants in France,



and yet the French King effectually cleared the nation of them at once, and we don't find he misses them at home. But I am not of the opinion they are so numerous as is pretended; their party is more numerous than their persons, and those mistaken people of the Church who are misled and deluded by their wheedling artifices to join with them, make their party the greater; but those will open their eyes when the Government shall set heartily about the work, and come off from them, as some animals which they say always desert a house when it is likely to fall.

2. The more numerous the more dangerous, and therefore the more need to suppress them; and God has suffered us to bear them as goads in our sides for not utterly extinguishing them long ago.

3. If we are to allow them only because we cannot suppress them, then it ought to be tried whether we can or no; and I am of opinion it is easy to be done, and could prescribe ways and means, if it were proper; but I doubt not the Government will find effectual methods for the rooting the contagion from the face of this land.

Another argument they use, which is this: that it is a time of war, and we have need to unite against the common enemy.

We answer, this common enemy had been no enemy if they had not made him so. He was quiet, in peace, and no way disturbed or encroached upon us, and we know no reason we had to quarrel with him.

But further, we make no question but we are able to deal with this common enemy without their help; but why must we unite with them because of the enemy? Will they go over to the enemy if we do not prevent it by a union with them? We are very well contented they should, and make no question we shall be ready to deal with them and the common enemy too, and better without them than with them.

Besides, if we have a common enemy, there is the more need to be secure against our private enemies. If there is one common enemy, we have the less need to have an enemy in our bowels.

It was a great argument some people used against suppressing the old money, that it was a time of war, and it was too great a risk for the nation to run; if we should not master it, we

should be undone. And yet the sequel proved the hazard was not so great but it might be mastered, and the success was answerable. The suppressing the Dissenters is not a harder work, nor a work of less necessity to the public. We can never enjoy a settled, uninterrupted union and tranquillity in this nation till the spirit of Whiggism, faction, and schism is melted down like the old money.

To talk of the difficulty is to frighten ourselves with chimeras and notions of a powerful party,<sup>1</sup> which are indeed a party without power. Difficulties often appear greater at a distance than when they are searched into with judgment and distinguished from the vapors and shadows that attend them.

We are not to be frightened with it; this age is wiser than that, by all our experience and theirs too. King Charles the First had early suppressed this party if he had taken more deliberate measures. In short, it is not worth arguing to talk of their arms. Their Monmouths, and Shaftesburys, and Argyles are gone; their Dutch sanctuary is at an end; Heaven has made way for their destruction; and if we do not close with the divine occasion, we are to blame ourselves, and may remember that we had once an opportunity to serve the Church of England by extirpating her implacable enemies, and, having let slip the minute that Heaven presented, may experimentally complain, *Post est occasio calva*.<sup>1</sup>

Here are some popular objections in the way: —

As first, the Queen has promised them to continue them in their tolerated liberty, and has told us she will be a religious observer of her word.

What Her Majesty will do we cannot help; but what, as the head of the Church, she ought to do, is another case. Her Majesty has promised to protect and defend the Church of England, and if she cannot effectually do that without the destruction of the Dissenters, she must of course dispense with one promise to comply with another. But to answer this cavil more effectually: Her Majesty did never promise to maintain the toleration to the destruction of the Church; but it is upon supposition that it may be compatible with the well-being and safety of the Church, which she had declared she would take especial care of. Now if these two interests clash, it is plain Her Ma-

<sup>1</sup> "Opportunity is bald-headed behind."

jesty's intentions are to uphold, protect, defend, and establish the Church, and this we conceive is impossible.

Perhaps it may be said that the Church is in no immediate danger from the Dissenters, and therefore it is time enough. But this is a weak answer.

For first, if a danger be real, the distance of it is no argument against, but rather a spur to quicken us to prevention, lest it be too late hereafter.

And secondly, here is the opportunity, and the only one perhaps that ever the Church had, to secure herself and destroy her enemies.

The representatives of the nation have now an opportunity; the time is come which all good men have wished for, that the gentlemen of England may serve the Church of England; now they are protected and encouraged by a Church of England Queen.

"What will you do for your sister in the day that she shall be spoken for?"

If ever you will establish the best Christian Church in the world; if ever you will suppress the spirit of enthusiasm; if ever you will free the nation from the viperous brood that have so long sucked the blood of their mother; if ever you will leave your posterity free from faction and rebellion, this is the time! This is the time to pull up this heretical weed of sedition that has so long disturbed the peace of our Church and poisoned the good corn.

But, says another hot and cold objector, this is renewing fire and faggot, reviving the act *De Heretico Comburendo*; this will be cruelty in its nature, and barbarous to all the world.

I answer, it is cruelty to kill a snake or a toad in cold blood, but the poison of their nature makes it a charity to our neighbors to destroy those creatures, not for any personal injury received, but for prevention; not for the evil they have done, but the evil they may do.

Serpents, toads, vipers, &c., are noxious to the body, and poison the sensitive life; these poison the soul, corrupt our posterity, ensnare our children, destroy the vitals of our happiness, our future felicity, and contaminate the whole mass.

Shall any law be given to such wild creatures? Some beasts are for sport, and the huntsmen give them advantages of



ground; but some are knocked on the head by all possible ways of violence and surprise.

I do not prescribe fire and faggot, but, as Scipio said of Carthage, *Delenda est Carthago*, they are to be rooted out of this nation, if ever we will live in peace, serve God, or enjoy our own. As for the mann<sup>er</sup>, I leave it to those hands who have a right to execute God's justice on the nation's and the Church's enemies.

But if we must be frightened from this justice under the specious pretences and odious sense of cruelty, nothing will be effected: it will be more barbarous to our own children and dear posterity when they shall reproach their fathers, as we do ours, and tell us, "You had an opportunity to root out this cursed race from the world, under the favor and protection of a true English queen; and out of your foolish pity you spared them, because, forsooth, you would not be cruel; and now our Church is suppressed and persecuted, our religion trampled under foot, our estates plundered, our persons imprisoned and dragged to jails, gibbets, and scaffolds: your sparing this Amalekite race is our destruction, your mercy to them proves cruelty to your poor posterity."

How just will such reflections be when our posterity shall fall under the merciless clutches of this uncharitable generation, when our Church shall be swallowed up in schism, faction, enthusiasm, and confusion; when our government shall be devolved upon foreigners, and our monarchy dwindled into a republic!

It would be more rational for us, if we must spare this generation, to summon our own to a general massacre, and, as we have brought them into the world free, send them out so, and not betray them to destruction by our supine negligence, and then cry, "It is mercy."

Moses was a merciful, meek man, and yet with what fury did he run through the camp, and cut the throats of three-and-thirty thousand of his dear Israelites that were fallen into idolatry. What was the reason? It was mercy to the rest to make these examples, to prevent the destruction of the whole army.

How many millions of future souls we save from infection and delusion, if the present race of poisoned spirits were purged from the face of the land!

It is vain to trifle in this matter; the light foolish handling of

them by mulcts, fines, &c., — it is their glory and their advantage. If the gallows instead of the Counter,<sup>1</sup> and the galleys instead of the fines, were the reward of going to a conventicle, to preach or hear, there would not be so many sufferers. The spirit of martyrdom is over; they that will go to church to be chosen sheriffs and mayors would go to forty churches rather than be hanged.

If one severe law were made and punctually executed, that whoever was found at a conventicle should be banished the nation, and the preacher be hanged, we should soon see an end of the tale. They would all come to church, and one age would make us all one again.

To talk of five shillings a month for not coming to the sacrament, and one shilling per week for not coming to church, — this is such a way of converting people as never was known; this is selling them a liberty to transgress for so much money. If it be not a crime, why don't we give them full license? And if it be, no price ought to compound for the committing it, for that is selling a liberty to people to sin against God and the government.

If it be a crime of the highest consequence, both against the peace and welfare of the nation, the glory of God, the good of the Church, and the happiness of the soul, let us rank it among capital offences, and let it receive a punishment in proportion to it.

We hang men for trifles, and banish them for things not worth naming; but an offence against God and the Church, against the welfare of the world and the dignity of religion, shall be bought off for five shillings! This is such a shame to a Christian government that it is with regret I transmit it to posterity.

If men sin against God, affront His ordinances, rebel against His Church, and disobey the precepts of their superiors, let them suffer as such capital crimes deserve. So will religion flourish, and this divided nation be once again united. . . .

It is high time, then, for the friends of the Church of England to think of building up and establishing her in such a manner that she may be no more invaded by foreigners, nor divided by factions, schisms, and error.

<sup>1</sup> The city prison.

If this could be done by gentle and easy methods, I should be glad; but the wound is corroded, the vitals begin to mortify, and nothing but amputation of members can complete the cure; all the ways of tenderness and compassion, all persuasive arguments, have been made use of in vain.

The humor of the Dissenters has so increased among the people, that they hold the Church in defiance, and the house of God is an abomination among them; nay, they have brought up their posterity in such prepossessed aversions to our holy religion, that the ignorant mob think we are all idolaters and worshippers of Baal, and account it a sin to come within the walls of our churches.

The primitive Christians were not more shy of a heathen temple or of meat offered to idols, nor the Jews of swine's flesh, than some of our Dissenters are of the Church, and the divine service solemnized therein.

This obstinacy must be rooted out with the profession of it; while the generation are left at liberty daily to affront God Almighty and dishonor His holy worship, we are wanting in our duty to God and our mother, the Church of England.

How can we answer it to God, to the Church, and to our posterity, to leave them entangled with fanaticism, error, and obstinacy in the bowels of the nation; to leave them an enemy in their streets, that in time may involve them in the same crimes, and endanger the utter extirpation of religion in the nation?

What is the difference betwixt this and being subjected to the power of the Church of Rome, from whence we have reformed? If one be an extreme on one hand, and one on another, it is equally destructive to the truth to have errors settled among us, let them be of what nature they will.

Both are enemies of our Church and of our peace; and why should it not be as criminal to admit an enthusiast as a Jesuit? Why should the Papist with his seven sacraments be worse than the Quaker with no sacraments at all? Why should religious houses be more intolerable than meeting-houses? Alas, the Church of England! What with Popery on one hand, and schismatics on the other, how has she been crucified between two thieves!

Now let us crucify the thieves. Let her foundations be established upon the destruction of her enemies. The doors of mercy



being always open to the returning part of the deluded people, let the obstinate be ruled with the rod of iron.

Let all true sons of so holy and oppressed a mother, exasperated by her afflictions, harden their hearts against those who have oppressed her.

And may God Almighty put it into the hearts of all the friends of truth to lift up a standard against pride and Antichrist, that the posterity of the sons of error may be rooted out from the face of this land for ever.

## A TRUE RELATION OF THE APPARITION OF ONE MRS. VEAL

THE NEXT DAY AFTER HER DEATH, TO ONE MRS. BARGRAVE, AT CANTERBURY, THE EIGHTH OF SEPTEMBER,  
1705

1706

[This is one of Defoe's earliest experiments in fiction, and illustrates his usual habit of making his narrative writings so circumstantial in detail as to assume the appearance of veracious chronicle. It was formerly supposed that one object of the pamphlet was to increase the sale of Drelin-court's book on Death; this has been disproved, but Defoe's narrative was reprinted in some editions of Drelin-court's work, as a testimony to its worth.]

### THE PREFACE

THIS relation is matter of fact, and attended with such circumstances as may induce any reasonable man to believe it. It was sent by a gentleman, a justice of peace at Maidstone, in Kent, and a very intelligent person, to his friend in London, as it is here worded; which discourse is attested by a very sober and understanding gentlewoman and kinswoman of the said gentleman's, who lives in Canterbury, within a few doors of the house in which the within-named Mrs. Bargrave lives; who believes his kinswoman to be of so discerning a spirit, as not to be put upon by any fallacy, and who positively assured him that the whole matter as it is here related and laid down is really true, and what she herself had in the same words, as near as may be, from Mrs. Bargrave's own mouth, who, she knows, had no reason to invent and publish such a story,

nor any design to forge and tell a lie, being a woman of much honesty and virtue, and her whole life a course, as it were, of piety. The use which we ought to make of it is to consider that there is a life to come after this, and a just God who will retribute to every one according to the deeds done in the body, and therefore to reflect upon our past course of life we have led in the world; that our time is short and uncertain; and that if we would escape the punishment of the ungodly and receive the reward of the righteous, which is the laying hold of eternal life, we ought, for the time to come, to return to God by a speedy repentance, ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well; to seek after God early, if haply He may be found of us, and lead such lives for the future as may be well pleasing in His sight.

This thing is so rare in all its circumstances, and on so good authority, that my reading and conversation has not given me anything like it. It is fit to gratify the most ingenious and serious inquirer. Mrs. Bargrave is the person to whom Mrs. Veal appeared after her death; she is my intimate friend, and I can avouch for her reputation for these last fifteen or sixteen years, on my own knowledge; and I can confirm the good character she had from her youth to the time of my acquaintance; though since this relation she is calumniated by some people that are friends to the brother of Mrs. Veal who appeared, who think the relation of this appearance to be a reflection, and endeavor what they can to blast Mrs. Bargrave's reputation, and to laugh the story out of countenance. But by the circumstances thereof, and the cheerful disposition of Mrs. Bargrave, notwithstanding the unheard-of ill-usage of a very wicked husband, there is not the least sign of dejection in her face; nor did I ever hear her let fall a desponding or murmuring expression; nay, not when actually under her husband's barbarity, which I have been witness to, and several other persons of undoubted reputation.

Now you must know Mrs. Veal was a maiden gentlewoman of about thirty years of age, and for some years last past had been troubled with fits, which were perceived coming on her by her going off from her discourse very abruptly to some impertinence. She was maintained by an only brother, and kept his house in Dover. She was a very pious woman, and her bro-

ther a very sober man, to all appearance; but now he does all he can to null or quash the story. Mrs. Veal was intimately acquainted with Mrs. Bargrave from her childhood. Mrs. Veal's circumstances were then mean; her father did not take care of his children as he ought, so that they were exposed to hardships; and Mrs. Bargrave in those days had as unkind a father, though she wanted neither for food nor clothing, whilst Mrs. Veal wanted for both; so that it was in the power of Mrs. Bargrave to be very much her friend in several instances, which mightily endeared Mrs. Veal; insomuch that she would often say, "Mrs. Bargrave, you are not only the best, but the only friend I have in the world; and no circumstance in life shall ever dissolve my friendship." They would often condole each other's adverse fortunes, and read together Drelincourt *Upon Death*, and other good books; and so, like two Christian friends, they comforted each other under their sorrow.

Some time after, Mr. Veal's friends got him a place in the custom-house at Dover, which occasioned Mrs. Veal, by little and little, to fall off from her intimacy with Mrs. Bargrave, though there never was any such thing as a quarrel; but an indifference came on by degrees, till at last Mrs. Bargrave had not seen her in two years and a half; though about a twelve-month of the time Mrs. Bargrave had been absent from Dover, and this last half-year had been in Canterbury about two months of the time, dwelling in a house of her own.

In this house, on the 8th of September last, viz., 1705, she was sitting alone, in the forenoon, thinking over her unfortunate life, and arguing herself into a due resignation to Providence, though her condition seemed hard. "And," said she, "I have been provided for hitherto, and doubt not but I shall be still; and am well satisfied that my afflictions shall end when it is most fit for me"; and then she took up her sewing-work, which she had no sooner done but she hears a knocking at the door. She went to see who was there, and this proved to be Mrs. Veal, her old friend, who was in a riding-habit; at that moment of time the clock struck twelve at noon.

"Madam," said Mrs. Bargrave, "I am surprised to see you, you have been so long a stranger"; but told her she was glad to see her, and offered to salute her, which Mrs. Veal complied with, till their lips almost touched; and then Mrs. Veal drew



her hand across her own eyes and said, "I am not very well," and so waived it. She told Mrs. Bargrave she was going a journey, and had a great mind to see her first. "But," says Mrs. Bargrave, "how came you to take a journey alone? I am amazed at it, because I know you have so fond a brother." "Oh," says Mrs. Veal, "I gave my brother the slip, and came away, because I had so great a desire to see you before I took my journey." So Mrs. Bargrave went in with her into another room within the first, and Mrs. Veal set her down in an elbow-chair, in which Mrs. Bargrave was sitting when she heard Mrs. Veal knock. Then says Mrs. Veal, "My dear friend, I am come to renew our old friendship again, and beg your pardon for my breach of it; and if you can forgive me, you are one of the best of women." "Oh," says Mrs. Bargrave, "don't mention such a thing. I have not had an uneasy thought about it; I can easily forgive it." "What did you think of me?" said Mrs. Veal. Says Mrs. Bargrave, "I thought you were like the rest of the world, and that prosperity had made you forget yourself and me." Then Mrs. Veal reminded Mrs. Bargrave of the many friendly offices she did in her former days, and much of the conversation they had with each other in the times of their adversity; what books they read, and what comfort in particular they received from Drelincourt's *Book of Death*, which was the best, she said, on that subject ever wrote. She also mentioned Dr. Sherlock, the two Dutch books which were translated, wrote upon Death, and several others; but Drelincourt, she said, had the clearest notions of death and the future state of any who had handled that subject. Then she asked Mrs. Bargrave whether she had Drelincourt. She said, "Yes." Says Mrs. Veal, "Fetch it." And so Mrs. Bargrave goes upstairs and brings it down. Says Mrs. Veal, "Dear Mrs. Bargrave, if the eyes of our faith were as open as the eyes of our body, we should see numbers of angels about us for our guard. The notions we have of heaven now are nothing like what it is, as Drelincourt says. Therefore be comforted under your afflictions, and believe that the Almighty has a particular regard to you, and that your afflictions are marks of God's favor; and when they have done the business they are sent for, they shall be removed from you. And believe me, my dear friend, believe what I say to you, one minute of future happiness will infinitely reward you for all

your sufferings; for I can never believe" (and claps her hand upon her knee with great earnestness, which indeed ran through most of her discourse) "that ever God will suffer you to spend all your days in this afflicted state; but be assured that your afflictions shall leave you, or you them, in a short time." She spake in that pathetic and heavenly manner that Mrs. Bargrave wept several times, she was so deeply affected with it.

Then Mrs. Veal mentioned Dr. Horneck's *Ascetic*, at the end of which he gives an account of the lives of the primitive Christians. Their pattern she recommended to our imitation, and said their conversation was not like this of our age; "for now," says she, "there is nothing but frothy, vain discourse, which is far different from theirs. Theirs was to edification, and to build one another up in faith, so that they were not as we are, nor are we as they were; but," said she, "we might do as they did. There was a hearty friendship among them; but where is it now to be found?" Says Mrs. Bargrave, "It is hard indeed to find a true friend in these days." Says Mrs. Veal, "Mr. Norris has a fine copy of verses, called *Friendship in Perfection*, which I wonderfully admire. Have you seen the book?" says Mrs. Veal. "No," says Mrs. Bargrave, "but I have the verses of my own writing out." "Have you?" says Mrs. Veal; "then fetch them." Which she did from above-stairs, and offered them to Mrs. Veal to read, who refused, and waived the thing, saying holding down her head would make it ache; and then desired Mrs. Bargrave to read them to her, which she did. As they were admiring *Friendship* Mrs. Veal said, "Dear Mrs. Bargrave, I shall love you for ever." In these verses there is twice used the word Elysian. "Ah!" says Mrs. Veal, "these poets have such names for heaven!" She would often draw her hand across her own eyes and say, "Mrs. Bargrave, do not you think I am mightily impaired by my fits?" "No," says Mrs. Bargrave, "I think you look as well as ever I knew you."

After all this discourse, which the apparition put in much finer words than Mrs. Bargrave said she could pretend to, and as much more than she can remember (for it cannot be thought that an hour and three-quarters' conversation could be retained, though the main of it she thinks she does), she said to

Mrs. Bargrave she would have her write a letter to her brother, and tell him she would have him give rings to such and such, and that there was a purse of gold in her cabinet, and that she would have two broad pieces given to her cousin Watson.

Talking at this rate, Mrs. Bargrave thought that a fit was coming upon her, and so placed herself in a chair just before her knees, to keep her from falling to the ground, if her fits should occasion it (for the elbow-chair, she thought, would keep her from falling on either side); and to divert Mrs. Veal, as she thought, took hold of her gown-sleeve several times, and commended it. Mrs. Veal told her it was a scoured silk, and newly made up. But for all this, Mrs. Veal persisted in her request, and told Mrs. Bargrave that she must not deny her, and she would have her tell her brother all their conversation when she had an opportunity. "Dear Mrs. Veal," said Mrs. Bargrave, "this seems so impertinent that I cannot tell how to comply with it; and what a mortifying story will our conversation be to a young gentleman!" "Well," says Mrs. Veal, "I must not be denied." "Why," says Mrs. Bargrave, "it is much better, methinks, to do it yourself." "No," says Mrs. Veal, "though it seems impertinent to you now, you will see more reason for it hereafter." Mrs. Bargrave then, to satisfy her importunity, was going to fetch a pen and ink, but Mrs. Veal said, "Let it alone now, and do it when I am gone; but you must be sure to do it"; which was one of the last things she enjoined her at parting. And so she promised her.

Then Mrs. Veal asked for Mrs. Bargrave's daughter. She said she was not at home. "But if you have a mind to see her," says Mrs. Bargrave, "I'll send for her." "Do," says Mrs. Veal. On which she left her, and went to a neighbor's to send for her; and by the time Mrs. Bargrave was returning, Mrs. Veal was got without the door into the street, in the face of the beast-market, on a Saturday (which is market-day), and stood ready to part. As soon as Mrs. Bargrave came to her, she asked her why she was in such haste. She said she must be going, though perhaps she might not go her journey until Monday; and told Mrs. Bargrave she hoped she should see her again at her cousin Watson's before she went whither she was going. Then she said she would take her leave of her, and walked from Mrs. Bar-



grave in her view, till a turning interrupted the sight of her, which was three-quarters after one in the afternoon.

Mrs. Veal died the 7th of September, at twelve o'clock at noon, of her fits, and had not above four hours' sense before death, in which time she received the sacrament. The next day after Mrs. Veal's appearing, being Sunday, Mrs. Bargrave was so mightily indisposed with a cold and a sore throat, that she could not go out that day; but on Monday morning she sent a person to Captain Watson's to know if Mrs. Veal was there. They wondered at Mrs. Bargrave's inquiry, and sent her word that she was not there, nor was expected. At this answer, Mrs. Bargrave told the maid she had certainly mistook the name or made some blunder. And though she was ill, she put on her hood, and went herself to Captain Watson's, though she knew none of the family, to see if Mrs. Veal was there or not. They said they wondered at her asking, for that she had not been in town; they were sure, if she had, she would have been there. Says Mrs. Bargrave, "I am sure she was with me on Saturday almost two hours." They said it was impossible; for they must have seen her, if she had. In comes Captain Watson while they are in dispute, and said that Mrs. Veal was certainly dead, and her escutcheons were making. This strangely surprised Mrs. Bargrave, when she sent to the person immediately who had the care of them, and found it true. Then she related the whole story to Captain Watson's family, and what gown she had on, and how striped, and that Mrs. Veal told her it was scoured. Then Mrs. Watson cried out, "You have seen her indeed, for none knew but Mrs. Veal and myself that the gown was scoured." And Mrs. Watson owned that she described the gown exactly; "for," said she, "I helped her to make it up." This Mrs. Watson blazed all about the town, and avouched the demonstration of the truth of Mrs. Bargrave's seeing Mrs. Veal's apparition; and Captain Watson carried two gentlemen immediately to Mrs. Bargrave's house to hear the relation from her own mouth. And when it spread so fast that gentlemen and persons of quality, the judicious and skeptical part of the world, flocked in upon her, it at last became such a task that she was forced to go out of the way; for they were in general extremely satisfied of the truth of the thing, and plainly saw that Mrs. Bargrave was no hypochondriac, for she always appears with

such a cheerful air and pleasing mien, that she has gained the favor and esteem of all the gentry, and it is thought a great favor if they can but get the relation from her own mouth. I should have told you before that Mrs. Veal told Mrs. Bargrave that her sister and brother-in-law were just come down from London to see her. Says Mrs. Bargrave, "How came you to order matters so strangely?" "It could not be helped," says Mrs. Veal. And her brother and sister did come to see her, and entered the town of Dover just as Mrs. Veal was expiring. Mrs. Bargrave asked her whether she would drink some tea. Says Mrs. Veal, "I do not care if I do; but I'll warrant this mad fellow" (meaning Mrs. Bargrave's husband) "has broke all your trinkets." "But," says Mrs. Bargrave, "I'll get something to drink in, for all that." But Mrs. Veal waived it, and said, "It is no matter; let it alone"; and so it passed.

All the time I sat with Mrs. Bargrave, which was some hours, she recollected fresh sayings of Mrs. Veal. And one material thing more she told Mrs. Bargrave — that old Mr. Breton allowed Mrs. Veal ten pounds a year, which was a secret, and unknown to Mrs. Bargrave till Mrs. Veal told it her. Mrs. Bargrave never varies in her story, which puzzles those who doubt of the truth or are unwilling to believe it. A servant in the neighbor's yard adjoining to Mrs. Bargrave's house heard her talking to somebody an hour of the time Mrs. Veal was with her. Mrs. Bargrave went out to her next neighbor's the very moment she parted with Mrs. Veal, and told her what ravishing conversation she had with an old friend, and told the whole of it. Drelincourt's *Book of Death* is, since this happened, bought up strangely. And it is to be observed that, notwithstanding all the trouble and fatigue Mrs. Bargrave has undergone upon this account, she never took the value of a farthing, nor suffered her daughter to take anything of anybody, and therefore can have no interest in telling the story.

But Mr. Veal does what he can to stifle the matter, and said he would see Mrs. Bargrave; but yet it is certain matter of fact that he has been at Captain Watson's since the death of his sister, and yet never went near Mrs. Bargrave; and some of his friends report her to be a liar, and that she knew of Mr. Breton's ten pounds a year. But the person who pretends to say so has the reputation of a notorious liar among persons whom I

know to be of undoubted credit. Now, Mr. Veal is more of a gentleman than to say she lies, but says a bad husband has crazed her. But she needs only present herself and it will effectually confute that pretence. Mr. Veal says he asked his sister on her death-bed whether she had a mind to dispose of anything, and she said no. Now, the things which Mrs. Veal's apparition would have disposed of were so trifling, and nothing of justice aimed at in their disposal, that the design of it appears to me to be only in order to make Mrs. Bargrave so to demonstrate the truth of her appearance, as to satisfy the world of the reality thereof as to what she had seen and heard, and to secure her reputation among the reasonable and understanding part of mankind. And then again Mr. Veal owns that there was a purse of gold; but it was not found in her cabinet, but in a comb-box. This looks improbable; for that Mrs. Watson owned that Mrs. Veal was so very careful of the key of the cabinet that she would trust nobody with it; and if so, no doubt she would not trust her gold out of it. And Mrs. Veal's often drawing her hand over her eyes, and asking Mrs. Bargrave whether her fits had not impaired her, looks to me as if she did it on purpose to remind Mrs. Bargrave of her fits, to prepare her not to think it strange that she should put her upon writing to her brother to dispose of rings and gold, which looks so much like a dying person's request; and it took accordingly with Mrs. Bargrave, as the effects of her fits coming upon her; and was one of the many instances of her wonderful love to her and care of her that she should not be affrighted, which indeed appears in her whole management, particularly in her coming to her in the daytime, waiving the salutation, and when she was alone, and then the manner of her parting, to prevent a second attempt to salute her.

Now, why Mr. Veal should think this relation a reflection, as it is plain he does by his endeavoring to stifle it, I can't imagine, because the generality believe her to be a good spirit, her discourse was so heavenly. Her two great errands were to comfort Mrs. Bargrave in her affliction, and to ask her forgiveness for the breach of friendship, and with a pious discourse to encourage her. So that after all to suppose that Mrs. Bargrave could hatch such an invention as this from Friday noon to Saturday noon, supposing that she knew of Mrs. Veal's death the



very first moment, without jumbling circumstances, and without any interest too, she must be more witty, fortunate, and wicked too, than any indifferent person, I dare say, will allow. I asked Mrs. Bargrave several times if she was sure she felt the gown. She answered modestly, "If my senses are to be relied on, I am sure of it." I asked her if she heard a sound when she clapped her hand upon her knee. She said she did not remember she did, and she said, "She appeared to be as much a substance as I did, who talked with her. And I may," said she, "be as soon persuaded that your apparition is talking to me now as that I did not really see her; for I was under no manner of fear, and received her as a friend, and parted with her as such. I would not," says she, "give one farthing to make any one believe it; I have no interest in it. Nothing but trouble is entailed upon me for a long time, for aught I know; and had it not come to light by accident, it would never have been made public." But now she says she will make her own private use of it, and keep herself out of the way as much as she can; and so she has done since. She says she had a gentleman who came thirty miles to her to hear the relation, and that she had told it to a room full of people at a time. Several particular gentlemen have had the story from Mrs. Bargrave's own mouth.

This thing has very much affected me, and I am as well satisfied as I am of the best grounded matter of fact. And why we should dispute matter of fact because we cannot solve things of which we have no certain or demonstrative notions, seems strange to me. Mrs. Bargrave's authority and sincerity alone would have been undoubted in any other case.

## A SEASONABLE WARNING AND CAUTION

AGAINST THE INSINUATIONS OF PAPISTS AND JACOBITES  
IN FAVOR OF THE PRETENDER

1712

[The pamphlets represented by this and the following extract were written at a time when it was feared that the succession of the House of Hanover to the throne was threatened, in the event of Queen Anne's death, by the loyalty of the Jacobite party to the House of Stuart. The *Seasonable Warning and Caution* was a direct appeal, — though purport-

ing to be "a letter from an Englishman at the Court of Hanover," — and its conclusion is one of the best examples of Defoe's garrulous eloquence. *What if the Pretender should Come*, on the other hand, exemplifies his brilliant ironical method; it is one of two tracts whose titles were intended to delude the unsuspecting Jacobite reader, the other being called *Reasons against the Succession of the House of Hanover*.]

#### THE CONCLUSION

CONSIDER, then, honest countrymen and Protestants, what you are doing; look on your families; consider your innocent children, who you are going to give up to be bred in abominable superstition and idolatry; look on your dear country, which you are preparing to make the sea of war, blood, and confusion; look on your neighbors, who, while they are resisting this inundation, — for you may be assured honest men will resist it to the last, — you are to fight with, whose throats you must cut, and in whose blood you must dip your hands; and lastly, consider yourselves; how free, how quiet, how in peace, plenty and in Protestant liberty you live, but are with your own hands pulling down upon you, so far as you entertain thoughts of the Pretender, the walls of your own security, viz., the constitution, and making way for your French popish enemies to enter; to whom your religion, your liberties, your estates, your families, and your posterity, shall be made a sacrifice, and this flourishing nation be entirely ruined.

In the last place, all that have any concern left for the good of their country, and for the preserving the Protestant religion, will remember how much it is in the power of the people of Britain for ever to discourage all the attempts to be made in favor of these popish enemies, and to overthrow them in the execution; and it is on this foundation that this paper is made public. The late letter from Douay, written by some of that side, who very well understood the Pretender's true interest, acknowledges this, and that if the people of England could not be wheedled and deluded into the design, it was never to be done by force.

And is this your case, Britons! Will you be ruined by a people whom you ought to despise? Have they not been twenty years trying your strength, till they find it impossible for them to master you? And are they brought to such a condition as to use all their arts and shifts to bring on a peace? and will you be

brought now, in cool thoughts, to do that yourselves which you would never let them do, and which, without your most stupid negligence of yourselves, they could never do?

For this reason, I say, these lines are written, and this makes them just, and the argument rational. If I were to move you to what was not in your power, I should easily be answered by being told you could not do it; that you were not able, and the like; but is it not evident that the unanimous appearance of the people of Great Britain against the Pretender would at once render all the party desperate, and make them look upon the design as utterly impracticable? As their only hope is in the breaches they are making in your resolutions, so if they should see they gain no ground there, they would despair, and give it over.

It would not be worth notice to inquire who are and who are not for the Pretender; the invidious search into the conduct of great men, ministers of state and government, would be labor lost: no ministry will ever be for the Pretender, if they once may but be convinced that the people are steady; that he gets no ground in the country; that the aversions of the common people to his person and his government are not to be overcome: but if you, the good people of England, slacken your hands; if you give up the cause; if you abate your zeal for your own liberties, and for the Protestant religion; if you fall in with Popery and a French Pretender; if you forget the Revolution, and King William, what can you expect? who can stand by you then? Who can save them that will destroy themselves?

The work is before you; your deliverance, your safety is in your own hands, and therefore these things are now written. None can give you up; none can betray you but yourselves; and if you could see your own happiness, it is entirely in your power, by unanimous, steady adhering to your old principles, to secure your peace for ever. O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!



## AND WHAT IF THE PRETENDER SHOULD COME?

OR SOME CONSIDERATIONS OF THE ADVANTAGES AND  
REAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE PRETENDER'S POSSESS-  
ING THE CROWN OF GREAT BRITAIN

1713

. . . THAT then a case so popular, and of so much consequence as this is, may not want such due supports as the nature of the thing will allow, and especially since the advantages and good consequences of the thing itself are so many, and so easy to be seen, as his friends allege; why should not the good people of Britain be made easy, and their fears be turned into peaceable satisfaction, by seeing that this devil may not be so black as he is painted; and that the noise made of the Pretender, and the frightful things said of his coming, and of his being received here, may not be made greater scarecrows to us than they really are; and after all that has been said, if it should appear that the advantages of the Pretender's succession are really greater to us, and the dangers less to us, than those of the succession of Hanover, then much of their difficulties would be over, who, standing neuter as to persons, appear against the Pretender only because they are made to believe strange and terrible things of what shall befall the nation in case of his coming in, such as Popery, slavery, French power, destroying of our credit, and devouring our funds (as that scandalous scribbler, the *Review*,<sup>1</sup> has been laboring to suggest), with many other things which we shall endeavor to expose to you as they deserve. . . .

To begin, then, with that most popular and affrighting argument now made use of, as the bugbear of the people, against several other things besides Jacobitism, we mean French greatness. It is most evident that the fear of this must, by the nature of the thing, be effectually removed upon our receiving the Pretender. The grounds and reasons why French greatness is rendered formidable to us, and so much weight supposed to be in it, that, like the name of Scanderbeg, we fright our very children with it, lie only in this, that we suggest the King of

<sup>1</sup> Deitor's own journal.

France, being a professed enemy to the peace and liberty of Great Britain, will most certainly, as soon as he can a little recover himself, exercise all that formidable power to put the Pretender upon us, and not only to place him upon the throne of Great Britain, but to maintain and hold him up in it, against all the opposition, either of the people of Britain or the confederate princes leagued with the Elector of Hanover, who are in the interest of his claim or of his party. Now it is evident that upon a peaceable admitting this person, whom they call the Pretender, to receive and enjoy the crown here, all that formidable power becomes your friend, and the being so must necessarily take off from it everything that is called terrible. . . .

How strange is it that none of our people have yet thought of this way of securing their native country from the insults of France! Were but the Pretender once received as our king, we have no more disputes with the King of France, he has no pretence to invade or disturb us; what a quiet world would it be with us in such a case, when the greatest monarch in the universe should be our fast friend, and be in our interest to prevent any of the inconveniences which might happen to us from the disgust of other neighbors, who may be dissatisfied with us upon other accounts. As to the terrible things which some people fright us and themselves with, from the influence which French councils may have upon us, and of French methods of government being introduced among us, these we ought to esteem only clamors and noise, raised by a party to amuse and affright us. For pray let us inquire a little into them, and see if there be any reason for us to be so terrified at them; suppose they were really what is alleged, which we hope they are not; for example, the absolute dominion of the King of France over his subjects is such, say our people, as makes them miserable; well, but let us examine then: are we not already miserable for want of this absolute dominion? Are we not miserably divided? Is not our government miserably weak? Are we not miserably subjected to the rabbles and mob? Nay, is not the very crown mobbed here every now and then, into whatever our sovereign lord the people demand? Whereas, on the contrary, we see France entirely united as one man; no virulent scribblers there dare affront the government; no impertinent P—ments there disturb the monarch with their addresses and representations; no

superiority of laws restrain the administration; no insolent lawyers talk of the sacred constitution, in opposition to the more sacred prerogative; but all with harmony and general consent agree to support the majesty of their prince, and with their lives and fortunes; not in complimenting sham addresses only, but in reality and effectually, support the glory of their great monarch. In doing this they are all united together so firmly, as if they had but one heart and one mind, and that the king was the soul of the nation. What if they are what we foolishly call slaves to the absolute will of their prince? That slavery to them is mere liberty. They entertain no notion of that foolish liberty which we make so much noise about, nor have they any occasion of it, or any use for it if they had it. They are as industrious in trade, as vigorous in pursuit of their affairs, go on with as much courage, and are as well satisfied when they have wrought hard twenty or thirty years to get a little money for the king to take away, as we are to get it for our wives and children; and as they plant vines and plough lands, that the king and his great men may eat the fruit thereof, they think it as great a felicity as if they eat it themselves. . . . Is it not apparent that, under all the oppressions they talk so much of, the French are the nation the most improved and increased in manufactures, in navigation, in commerce, within these fifty years, of any nation in the world? And here we pretend liberty, property, constitutions, rights of subjects, and such stuff as that, and with all these fine gewgaws, which we pretend propagate trade and increase the wealth of the nation, we are every day declining, and become poor. How long will this nation be blinded by their own foolish customs? And when will they learn to know that the absolute government of a virtuous prince, who makes the good of his people his ultimate end, and esteems their prosperity his glory, is the best and most godlike government in the world?

Let us then be no more rendered uneasy with the notions that with the Pretender we must entertain French methods of government, such as tyranny and arbitrary power. Tyranny is no more tyranny, when improved for the subjects' advantage: perhaps when we have tried it we may find it as much for our good many ways, nay, and more too, than our present exorbitant liberties, especially unless we can make a better use of them,



and enjoy them, without being always going by the ears about them, as we see daily, not only with our governors, but even with one another. A little French slavery, though it be a frightful word among us, — that is, being made so by custom, — yet may do us a great deal of good in the main, as it may teach us not to over (under) value our liberties when we have them, so much as sometimes we have done; and this is not one of the least advantages which we shall gain by the coming of the Pretender. . . .

There seems to be but one thing more which those people who make such a clamor at the fears of the Pretender, take hold of, and this is religion; and they tell us that not only French government, and French influence, but French religion, that is to say Popery, will come upon us. But these people know not what they talk of, for it is evident that they shall be so far from being loaded with religion, that they will rather obtain that so long desired happiness of having no religion at all. This we may easily make appear has been the advantage which has been long labored for in this nation; and as the attainments we are arrived to of that kind are very considerable already, so we cannot doubt but that, if once the Pretender were settled quietly among us, an absolute subjection, as well of religious principles as civil liberties, to the disposal of the sovereign, would take place. This is an advantage so fruitful of several other manifest improvements, that though we have not room enough in this place to enlarge upon the particulars, we cannot doubt but it must be a most grateful piece of news to a great part of the nation, who have long groaned under the oppressions and cruel severities of the clergy, occasioned by their own strict lives and rigorous virtue, and their imposing such austerities and restraints upon the people; and in this particular the clamor of slavery will appear very scandalous in the nation, for, the slavery of religion being taken off, and an universal freedom of vice being introduced, what greater liberty can we enjoy? . . .

But we have more and greater advantages of the coming of the Pretender, and such as no question will invite you to receive him with great satisfaction and applause; and it cannot be necessary to inform you, for your direction in other cases, how the matter, as to real and imaginary advantage, stands

with the nation in this affair. And first, the coming of the Pretender will at once put us all out of debt. These abomination Whigs, and these bloody wars, carried on so long for little or nothing, have, as is evident to our senses now (whatever it was all along), brought a heavy debt upon the nation; so that if what a known author lately published is true, the government pays now almost six millions a year to the common people for interest of money; that is to say, the usurers eat up the nation, and devour six millions yearly; which is paid, and must be paid now for a long time, if some kind turn, such as this of the coming of the Pretender, or such like, does not help us out of it. The weight of this is not only great, insuperably great, but most of it is entailed for a terrible time, not only for our age, but beyond the age of our grandchildren, even for ninety-nine years. By how much the consideration of this debt is intolerable and afflicting to the last degree, by so much the greater must the obligation be to the person who will ease the nation of such a burden; and therefore we place it among the principal advantages which we are to receive from the admission of the Pretender, that he will not fail to rid us of this grievance, and by methods peculiar to himself deliver us from so great a burden as these debts are now, and, unless he deliver us, are like to be to the ages to come. Whether he will do this at once, by remitting most graciously to the nation the whole payment, and consequently take off the burden *brevi manu*, as with a sponge wiping out the infamous score, leaving it to fall as fate directs, or by prudent degrees, we know not, nor is it our business to determine it here. No doubt the doing it with a jerk, as we call it, *comme un coup de grace*, must be the most expeditious way; nay, and the kindest way of putting the nation out of its pain; for lingering deaths are counted cruel; and though *un coup d'éclat* may make an impression for the present, yet the astonishment is soonest over; besides, where is the loss to the nation in this sense? Though the money be stopped from the subject on one hand, if it be stopped to the subjects on the other, the nation loses or gains nothing. We know it will be answered that it is unjust, and that thousands of families will be ruined, because they who lose will not be those who gain. But what is this to the purpose in a national revolution? Unjust! Alas! is that an argument? Go and ask the Pretender!

Does not he say you have all done unjustly by him? and since the nation in general loses nothing, what obligation has he to regard the particular injury that some families may sustain? And yet farther, is it not remarkable that most of the money is paid by the cursed party of Whigs, who from the beginning officiously appeared to keep him from his right? And what obligation has he upon him to concern himself for doing them right in particular, more than other people? But to avoid the scandal of partiality, there is another thought offers to our view, which the nation is beholding to a particular author for putting us in mind of: if it be unjust that we should suppose the Pretender shall stop the payment on both sides, because it is doing the Whigs wrong, since the Tories, who perhaps, being chiefly landed men, pay the most taxes; then, to keep up a just balance, he need only continue the taxes to be paid in, and only stop the annuities and interest which are to be paid out. Thus both sides having no reason to envy or reproach one another with hardships, or with suffering unequally, they may every one lose in proportion, and the money may be laid up in the hands of the new sovereign, for the good of the nation. . . .

This amassing of treasure, by the stopping the funds on one hand, and the receiving the taxes on the other, will effectually enable the Pretender to set up and effectually maintain that glorious and so often desired method of government, *au coup de canon*, — *Anglice*, a standing army. . . . Then we should see a new face of our nation, and Britain would be no more a naked nation, as it has formerly been; then we should have numerous and gallant armies surrounding a martial prince, ready to make the world, as well as his own subjects, tremble. Then our inland counties would appear full of royal fortifications, citadels, forts, and strong towns, the beauty of the kingdom, and awe of factious rebels. It is a strange thing that this refractory people of ours could never be made sensible how much it is for the glory and safety of this nation that we should be put into a posture of defence against ourselves. It has been often alleged that this nation can never be ruined but with their own consent: if then we are our own enemies, is it not highly requisite that we should be put in a position to have our own ruin prevented? And that, since it is apparent we are no more fit to be trusted with our own liberties, having a natural and a national propen-



sity to destroy and undo ourselves, and may be brought to consent to our own ruin, we should have such princes as for the future know how to restrain us; and how reasonable is it to allow them forces to do so! . . .

This sums up the happiness of the Pretender's reign. We need not talk of security, as the *Review* has done, and pretend he is not able to give us security for the performance of anything he promises. Every man that has any sense of the principles, honor, and justice of the Pretender, his zeal for the Roman Catholic cause, his gratitude to his benefactor, the French King, and his love to the glory and happiness of his native country, must rest satisfied of his punctually performing all these great things for us. To ask him security would be not to affront him only, but to affront the whole nation; no man can doubt him; the nature of the thing allows that he must do us all that kindness; he cannot be true to his own reason without it. Wherefore this treaty executes itself, and appears so rational to believe, that whoever doubts it may be supposed to doubt even the veracity of James the Just. . . .

## A JOURNAL OF THE PLAGUE YEAR

BEING OBSERVATIONS OR MEMORIALS OF THE MOST REMARKABLE OCCURRENCES, AS WELL PUBLIC AS PRIVATE, WHICH HAPPENED IN LONDON DURING THE LAST GREAT VISITATION IN 1665

WRITTEN BY A CITIZEN WHO CONTINUED ALL THE WHILE IN LONDON. NEVER MADE PUBLIC BEFORE

1722

[This work is the most famous — unless we regard *Robinson Crusoe* as of the same class — of the fictitious narratives which Defoe issued under the guise of personal memoirs. It appeared at the time when a recurrence of the plague was feared, and seemed so authentic that at a later time it was quoted as an authority by Dr. Mead, who had been appointed to make a report on precautions in the interest of the public health. The *Journal* is not divided into chapters or sections; the extracts here given will be found on pages 11-18, 75-80, and 102-104 of the Temple edition.]

I NOW began to consider seriously with myself concerning my own case, and how I should dispose of myself; that is to say,

whether I should resolve to stay in London or shut up my house and flee, as many of my neighbors did. I have set this particular down so fully, because I know not but it may be of moment to those who come after me, if they come to be brought to the same distress, and to the same manner of making their choice; and therefore I desire this account may pass with them rather for a direction to themselves to act by than a history of my actings, seeing it may not be of one farthing value to them to note what became of me.

I had two important things before me: the one was the carrying on my business and shop, which was considerable, and in which was embarked all my effects in the world; and the other was the preservation of my life in so dismal a calamity as I saw apparently was coming upon the whole city, and which, however great it was, my fears perhaps, as well as other people's, represented to be much greater than it could be.

The first consideration was of great moment to me. My trade was a saddler, and as my dealings were chiefly not by a shop or chance trade, but among the merchants trading to the English colonies in America, so my effects lay very much in the hands of such. I was a single man, 't is true, but I had a family of servants whom I kept at my business; had a house, shop, and warehouses filled with goods; and, in short, to leave them all as things in such a case must be left, — that is to say, without any overseer or person fit to be trusted with them, — had been to hazard the loss not only of my trade, but of my goods, and indeed of all I had in the world.

I had an elder brother at the same time in London, and not many years before come over from Portugal, and advising with him, his answer was in three words, the same that was given in another case quite different, viz., "Master, save thyself." In a word, he was for my retiring into the country, as he resolved to do himself with his family; telling me — what he had, it seems, heard abroad — that the best preparation for the plague was to run away from it. As to my argument of losing my trade, my goods, or debts, he quite confuted me. He told me the same thing which I argued for my staying, viz., that I would trust God with my safety and health, was the strongest repulse to my pretensions of losing my trade and my goods. "For," says he, "is it not as reasonable that you should trust God with the

chance or risk of losing your trade, as that you should stay in so eminent a point of danger, and trust Him with your life?"

I could not argue that I was in any strait as to a place where to go, having several friends and relations in Northamptonshire, whence our family first came from; and particularly, I had an only sister in Lincolnshire, very willing to receive and entertain me.

My brother, who had already sent his wife and two children into Bedfordshire, and resolved to follow them, pressed my going very earnestly; and I had once resolved to comply with his desires, but at that time could get no horse; for though it is true all the people did not go out of the city of London, yet I may venture to say that in a manner all the horses did; for there was hardly a horse to be bought or hired in the whole city for some weeks. Once I resolved to travel on foot with one servant, and, as many did, lie at no inn, but carry a soldier's tent with us, and so lie in the fields, the weather being very warm, and no danger from taking cold. I say, as many did, because several did so at last, especially those who had been in the armies in the war which had not been many years past. And I must needs say that, speaking of second causes, had most of the people that traveled done so, the plague had not been carried into so many country towns and houses as it was, to the great damage, and indeed to the ruin, of abundance of people.

But then my servant, whom I had intended to take down with me, deceived me; and being frightened at the increase of the distemper, and not knowing when I should go, he took other measures, and left me; so I was put off for that time. And one way or other, I always found that to appoint to go away was always crossed by some accident or other, so as to disappoint and put it off again; and this brings in a story which otherwise might be thought a needless digression, viz., about these disappointments being from Heaven.

I mention this story also as the best method I can advise any person to take in such a case, especially if he be one that makes conscience of his duty, and would be directed what to do in it; namely, that he should keep his eye upon the particular providences which occur at that time, and look upon them complexly, as they regard one another, and as all together regard the question before him; and then, I think, he may safely take



them for intimations from Heaven of what is his unquestioned duty to do in such a case, — I mean as to going away from or staying in the place where we dwell, when visited with an infectious distemper.

It came very warmly into my mind one morning, as I was musing on this particular thing, that as nothing attended us without the direction or permission of Divine Power, so these disappointments must have something in them extraordinary; and I ought to consider whether it did not evidently point out, or intimate to me, that it was the will of Heaven I should not go. It immediately followed in my thoughts that, if it really was from God that I should stay, He was able effectually to preserve me in the midst of all the death and danger that would surround me; and that if I attempted to secure myself by fleeing from my habitation, and acted contrary to these intimations which I believed to be divine, it was a kind of flying from God, and that He could cause his justice to overtake me when and where He thought fit.

These thoughts quite turned my resolutions again, and when I came to discourse with my brother again, I told him that I inclined to stay and take my lot in that station in which God had placed me, and that it seemed to be made more especially my duty, on the account of what I have said.

My brother, though a very religious man himself, laughed at all I had suggested about its being an intimation from Heaven, and told me several stories of such foolhardy people, as he called them, as I was; that I ought indeed to submit to it as a work of Heaven if I had been any way disabled by distempers or diseases, and that then not being able to go, I ought to acquiesce in the direction of Him who, having been my Maker, had an undisputed right of sovereignty in disposing of me, and that then there had been no difficulty to determine which was the call of His providence and which was not; but that I should take it as an intimation from Heaven that I should not go out of town, only because I could not hire a horse to go, or my fellow was run away that was to attend me, was ridiculous, since at the same time I had my health and limbs, and other servants, and might with ease travel a day or two on foot, and, having a good certificate of being in perfect health, might either hire a horse or take post on the road, as I thought fit.

Then he proceeded to tell me of the mischievous consequences which attended the presumption of the Turks and Mahometans in Asia and in other places where he had been (for my brother, being a merchant, was a few years before, as I have already observed, returned from abroad, coming last from Lisbon), and how, presuming upon their professed predestinating notions, and of every man's end being predetermined and unalterably beforehand decreed, they would go unconcerned into infected places and converse with infected persons, by which means they died at the rate of ten or fifteen thousand a week; whereas the Europeans or Christian merchants, who kept themselves retired and reserved, generally escaped the contagion.

Upon these arguments my brother changed my resolutions again, and I began to resolve to go, and accordingly made all things ready; for, in short, the infection increased round me, and the bills<sup>1</sup> were risen to almost seven hundred a week, and my brother told me he would venture to stay no longer. I desired him to let me consider of it but till the next day, and I would resolve; and as I had already prepared everything as well as I could as to my business, and whom to entrust my affairs with, I had little to do but to resolve.

I went home that evening greatly oppressed in my mind, irresolute, and not knowing what to do. I had set the evening wholly apart to consider seriously about it, and was all alone; for already people had, as it were by a general consent, taken up the custom of not going out of doors after sunset; the reasons I shall have occasion to say more of by-and-by.

In the retirement of this evening I endeavored to resolve, first, what was my duty to do, and I stated the arguments which my brother had pressed me to go into the country, and I set against them the strong impressions which I had on my mind for staying; the visible call I seemed to have from the particular circumstance of my calling, and the care due from me for the preservation of my effects, which were, as I might say, my estate; also the intimations which I thought I had from Heaven, that to me signified a kind of direction to venture; and it occurred to me that, if I had what I might call a direction to stay, I ought to suppose it contained a promise of being preserved if I obeyed.

<sup>1</sup> That is, the "bills of mortality," the official register of deaths.

This lay close to me, and my mind seemed more and more encouraged to stay than ever, and supported with a secret satisfaction I should be kept. And to this, that, turning over the Bible which lay before me, and while my thoughts were more than ordinarily serious upon the question, I cried out, "Well, I know not what to do; Lord, direct me!" and the like. And at that juncture I happened to stop turning over the book at the 91st Psalm, and, casting my eye on the second verse, I read on to the seventh verse exclusive, and after that included the tenth, as follows: "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust; His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling," etc.

I scarce need tell the reader that from that moment I resolved that I would stay in the town, and, casting myself entirely upon the goodness and protection of the Almighty, would not seek any other shelter whatever; and that, as my times were in His hands, He was as able to keep me in a time of the infection as in a time of health; and if He did not think fit to deliver me, still I was in His hands, and it was meet He should do with me as should seem good to Him. . . .

I went all the first part of the time freely about the streets, though not so freely as to run myself into apparent danger, except when they dug the great pit in the churchyard of our parish of Aldgate. A terrible pit it was, and I could not resist my curiosity to go and see it. As near as I may judge, it was about forty feet in length, and about fifteen or sixteen feet broad, and at the time I first looked at it, about nine feet deep; but it was said they dug it near twenty feet deep afterwards in one part of



it, till they could go no deeper for the water; for they had, it seems, dug several large pits before this. For though the plague was long a-coming to our parish, yet, when it did come, there was no parish in or about London where it raged with such violence as in the two parishes of Aldgate and Whitechapel.

I say they had dug several pits in another ground, when the distemper began to spread in our parish, and especially when the dead-carts began to go about, which was not, in our parish, till the beginning of August. Into these pits they had put perhaps fifty or sixty bodies each; then they made larger holes, wherein they buried all that the cart brought in a week, which, by the middle to the end of August, came to from 200 to 400 a week; and they could not well dig them larger, because of the order of the magistrates confining them to leave no bodies within six feet of the surface; and the water coming on at about seventeen or eighteen feet, they could not well, I say, put more in one pit. But now, at the beginning of September, the plague raging in a dreadful manner, and the number of burials in our parish increasing to more than was ever buried in any parish about London of no larger extent, they ordered this dreadful gulf to be dug, — for such it was, rather than a pit.

They had supposed this pit would have supplied them for a month or more, when they dug it, and some blamed the churchwardens for suffering such a frightful thing, telling them they were making preparations to bury the whole parish, and the like. But time made it appear the churchwardens knew the condition of the parish better than they did; for, the pit being finished the 4th of September, I think, they began to bury in it the 6th, and by the 20th, which was just two weeks, they had thrown into it 1114 bodies, when they were obliged to fill it up, the bodies being then come to lie within six feet of the surface. I doubt not but there may be some ancient persons alive in the parish who can justify the fact of this, and are able to show even in what place of the churchyard the pit lay better than I can. The mark of it also was many years to be seen in the churchyard on the surface, lying in length parallel with the passage which goes by the west wall of the churchyard out of Houndsditch, and turns East again into Whitechapel, coming out near the Three Nuns' Inn.

It was about the 10th of September that my curiosity led, or

rather drove, me to go and see this pit again, when there had been near 400 people buried in it; and I was not content to see it in the day-time, as I had done before, for then there would have been nothing to have been seen but the loose earth; for all the bodies that were thrown in were immediately covered with earth by those they called the buriers, which at other times were called bearers; but I resolved to go in the night and see some of them thrown in.

There was a strict order to prevent people coming to those pits, and that was only to prevent infection. But after some time that order was more necessary, for people that were infected and near their end, and delirious also, would run to those pits, wrapped in blankets or rugs, and throw themselves in, and, as they said, bury themselves. I cannot say that the officers suffered any willingly to lie there; but I have heard that in a great pit in Finsbury, in the parish of Cripplegate, it lying open then to the fields, for it was not then walled about, some came and threw themselves in, and expired there, before they threw any earth upon them; and that when they came to bury others, and found them there, they were quite dead, though not cold.

This may serve a little to describe the dreadful condition of that day, though it is impossible to say anything that is able to give a true idea of it to those who did not see it, other than this, — that it was indeed very, very, very dreadful, and such as no tongue can express.

I got admittance into the churchyard by being acquainted with the sexton who attended, who, though he did not refuse me at all, yet earnestly persuaded me not to go, telling me very seriously, for he was a good, religious, and sensible man, that it was indeed their business and duty to venture, and to run all hazards, and that in it they might hope to be preserved; but that I had no apparent call to it but my own curiosity, which, he said, he believed I would not pretend was sufficient to justify my running that hazard. I told him I had been pressed in my mind to go, and that perhaps it might be an instructing sight, that might not be without its uses. "Nay," says the good man, "if you will venture upon that score, name of God go in; for, depend upon it, 'twill be a sermon to you, it may be, the best that ever you heard in your life. 'Tis a speaking sight," says he, "and has a voice with it, and a loud one, to call us all to repent-

ance." And with that he opened the door and said, "Go, if you will."

His discourse had shocked my resolution a little, and I stood wavering for a good while, but just at that interval I saw two links come over from the end of the Minories, and heard the bellman, and then appeared a dead-cart, as they called it, coming over the streets; so I could no longer resist my desire of seeing it, and went in. There was nobody, as I could perceive at first, in the churchyard, or going into it, but the buriers and the fellow that drove the cart, or rather led the horse and cart; but when they came up to the pit they saw a man go to and again, muffled up in a brown cloak, and making motions with his hands under his cloak, as if he was in a great agony, and the buriers immediately gathered about him, supposing he was one of those poor delirious or desperate creatures that used to pretend, as I have said, to bury themselves. He said nothing as he walked about, but two or three times groaned very deeply and loud, and sighed as he would break his heart.

When the buriers came up to him they soon found he was neither a person infected and desperate, as I have observed above, or a person distempered in mind, but one oppressed with a dreadful weight of grief indeed, having his wife and several of his children all in the cart that was just come in with him, and he followed in an agony and excess of sorrow. He mourned heartily, as it was easy to see, but with a kind of masculine grief that could not give itself vent by tears; and, calmly defying the buriers to let him alone, said he would only see the bodies thrown in and go away. So they left importuning him. But no sooner was the cart turned round and the bodies shot into the pit promiscuously, which was a surprise to him, for he at least expected they would have been decently laid in, though indeed he was afterwards convinced that was impracticable, — I say, no sooner did he see the sight but he cried aloud, unable to contain himself. I could not hear what he said, but he went backward two or three steps and fell down in a swoon. The buriers ran to him and took him up, and in a little while he came to himself, and they led him away to the Pie Tavern over against the end of Houndsditch, where, it seems, the man was known, and where they took care of him. He looked into the pit again as he went away, but the buriers had covered the bod-



ies so immediately with throwing in earth, that, though there was light enough, — for there were lanterns, and candles in them, placed all night round the sides of the pit, upon heaps of earth, seven or eight, or perhaps more, — yet nothing could be seen.

This was a mournful scene indeed, and affected me almost as much as the rest; but the other was awful and full of terror. The cart had in it sixteen or seventeen bodies; some were wrapped up in linen sheets, some in rags, some little other than naked, or so loose that what covering they had fell from them in the shooting out of the cart; and they fell quite naked among the rest. But the matter was not much to them, or the indecency much to anyone else, seeing they were all dead, and were to be huddled together into the common grave of mankind, as we may call it; for here was no difference made, but poor and rich went together; there was no other way of burials, neither was it possible there should, for coffins were not to be had for the prodigious numbers that fell in such a calamity as this. . . .

In these walks I had many dismal scenes before my eyes, as particularly of persons falling dead in the streets, terrible shrieks and screechings of women, who, in their agonies, would throw open their chamber windows and cry out in a dismal, surprising manner. It is impossible to describe the variety of postures in which the passions of the poor people would express themselves.

Passing through Tokenhouse Yard, in Lothbury, of a sudden a casement violently opened just over my head, and a woman gave three frightful screeches, and then cried — “Oh! death, death, death!” in a most inimitable tone, and which struck me with horror and a chillness in my very blood. There was nobody to be seen in the whole street, neither did any other window open, for people had no curiosity now in any case, nor could anybody help one another; so I went on to pass into Bell Alley.

Just in Bell Alley, on the right hand of the passage, there was a more terrible cry than that, though it was not so directed out at the window; but the whole family was in a terrible fright, and I could hear women and children run screaming about the rooms like distracted, when a garret-window opened,

and somebody from a window on the other side the alley called and asked, "What is the matter?" Upon which, from the first window it was answered, "O Lord! my old master has hanged himself!" The other asked again, "Is he quite dead?" and the first answered, "Ay, ay, quite dead; quite dead and cold!" This person was a merchant and a deputy alderman, and very rich. I care not to mention the name, though I knew his name too; but that would be an hardship to the family, which is now flourishing again.

But this is but one; it is scarce credible what dreadful cases happened in particular families every day. People in the rage of the distemper, or in the torment of their swellings, which was indeed intolerable, running out of their own government, raving and distracted, and oftentimes laying violent hands upon themselves, throwing themselves out at their windows, shooting themselves, etc.; mothers murdering their own children in their lunacy; some dying of mere grief as a passion, some of mere fright and surprise without any infection at all, others frightened into idiotism and foolish distractions, some into despair and lunacy, others into melancholy madness.

# JONATHAN SWIFT

## A TALE OF A TUB

WRITTEN FOR THE UNIVERSAL IMPROVEMENT OF MANKIND

*Diu multumque desideratum*

1704

[This early example of Swift's satire was written chiefly in the year 1697. The title was already a familiar phrase in the meaning of an absurd or pointless story. The book contains a Dedication to Lord Somers, an address from Bookseller to Reader, an Epistle Dedicatory to Posterity, an Author's Preface, and eleven sections, of which one is called The Introduction, five are called Digressions of various kinds, and the remaining five give the Tale of the Tub proper, — the story of the three brothers. Of these, Peter represents the Roman Catholic Church, Martin (from Martin Luther) the moderate Reformers — especially of the Church of England, and Jack (from John Calvin) the more violent reformers — Presbyterians and other Dissenters. The father's will is of course the Bible, and the sons' coats are organized theology and church polity; for the more detailed allusions throughout the satire, the reader must be referred to some annotated edition, like that of Craik or Prescott. For convenience, extracts from the tale of the three brothers are here brought together continuously, — from Sections II, IV, VI, and XI; those from the Digression on Madness, which forms Section IX, are added separately.]

### THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY, TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE POSTERITY

SIR: I here present your Highness with the fruits of a very few leisure hours, stolen from the short intervals of a world of business, and of an employment quite alien from such amusements as this the poor production of that refuse of time, which has lain heavy upon my hands during a long prorogation of Parliament, a great dearth of foreign news, and a tedious fit of rainy weather; for which, and other reasons, it cannot choose extremely to deserve such a patronage as that of your Highness, whose numberless virtues, in so few years, make the world look upon you as the future example to all princes. For although your Highness is hardly got clear of infancy, yet has



the universal learned world already resolved upon appealing to your future dictates, with the lowest and most resigned submission, fate having decreed you sole arbiter of the productions of human wit, in this polite and most accomplished age. Methinks the number of appellants were enough to shock and startle any judge of a genius less unlimited than yours; but, in order to prevent such glorious trials, the person, it seems, to whose care the education of your Highness is committed, has resolved (as I am told) to keep you in almost a universal ignorance of our studies, which it is your inherent birthright to inspect.

It is amazing to me that this person should have the assurance, in the face of the sun, to go about persuading your Highness that our age is almost wholly illiterate, and has hardly produced one writer upon any subject. I know very well that, when your Highness shall come to riper years, and have gone through the learning of antiquity, you will be too curious to neglect inquiring into the authors of the very age before you; and to think that this insolent, in the account he is preparing for your view, designs to reduce them to a number so insignificant as I am ashamed to mention, — it moves my zeal and my spleen, for the honor and interest of our vast flourishing body, as well as of myself, for whom, I know by long experience, he has professed, and still continues, a peculiar malice.

It is not unlikely that, when your Highness will one day peruse what I am now writing, you may be ready to expostulate with your governor, upon the credit of what I here affirm, and command him to show you some of our productions. To which he will answer (for I am well informed of his designs) by asking your Highness where they are? and what is become of them? and pretend it a demonstration that there never were any, because they are not then to be found. Not to be found! Who has mislaid them? are they sunk in the abyss of things? It is certain that in their own nature they were light enough to swim upon the surface for all eternity. Therefore the fault is in him who tied weights so heavy to their heels as to depress them to the centre. Is their very essence destroyed? Who has annihilated them? Were they drowned by purges, or martyred by pipes? But, that it may no longer be a doubt with your Highness who is to be the author of this universal ruin, I beseech you

to observe that large and terrible scythe which your governor affects to bear continually about him. Be pleased to remark the length and strength, the sharpness and hardness, of his nails and teeth; consider his baneful, abominable breath, enemy to life and matter, infectious and corrupting; and then reflect whether it be possible for any mortal ink and paper of this generation to make a suitable resistance. Oh! that your Highness would one day resolve to disarm this usurping *maître du palais* of his furious engines, and bring your empire *hors de page*.<sup>1</sup>

It were needless to recount the several methods of tyranny and destruction, which your governor is pleased to practice upon this occasion. His inveterate malice is such to the writings of our age, that of several thousands produced yearly from this renowned city, before the next revolution of the sun there is not one to be heard of. Unhappy infants! many of them barbarously destroyed, before they have so much as learnt their mother tongue to beg for pity. Some he stifles in their cradles; others he frights into convulsions, whereof they suddenly die; some he flays alive, others he tears limb from limb. Great numbers are offered to Moloch; and the rest, tainted by his breath, die of a languishing consumption.

But the concern I have most at heart is for our corporation of poets, from whom I am preparing a petition to your Highness, to be subscribed with the names of one hundred and thirty-six of the first rate, but whose immortal productions are never likely to reach your eyes, though each of them is now an humble and earnest appellant for the laurel, and has large comely volumes ready to show, for a support to his pretensions. The never-dying works of these illustrious persons, your governor, sir, has devoted to unavoidable death; and your Highness is to be made to believe that our age has never arrived at the honor to produce one single poet. We confess Immortality to be a great and powerful goddess, but in vain we offer up to her our devotions and our sacrifices, if your Highness's governor, who has usurped the priesthood, must, by an unparalleled ambition and avarice, wholly intercept and devour them.

To affirm that our age is altogether unlearned, and devoid of writers in any kind, seems to be an assertion so bold and so false, that I have been some time thinking the contrary may

<sup>1</sup> Independent (having finished the term of service of a page).

almost be proved by uncontrollable demonstration. It is true, indeed, that although their numbers be vast, and their productions numerous in proportion, yet are they hurried so hastily off the scene that they escape our memory and elude our sight. When I first thought of this address, I had prepared a copious list of titles to present to your Highness, as an undisputed argument for what I affirm. The originals were posted fresh upon all gates and corners of streets; but, returning in a very few hours to take a review, they were all torn down, and fresh ones in their places. I inquired after them among readers and booksellers, but I inquired in vain; the memorial of them was lost among men; their place was no more to be found; and I was laughed to scorn for a clown and a pedant, without all taste and refinement, little versed in the course of present affairs, and that knew nothing of what had passed in the best companies of court and town. So that I can only avow in general to your Highness that we do abound in learning and wit; but to fix upon particulars is a task too slippery for my slender abilities. If I should venture in a windy day to affirm to your Highness that there is a large cloud near the horizon, in the form of a bear; another in the zenith, with the head of an ass; a third to the westward, with claws like a dragon; and your Highness should in a few minutes think fit to examine the truth, it is certain they would all be changed in figure and position. New ones would arise, and all we could agree upon would be that clouds there were, but that I was grossly mistaken in the zoögraphy and topography of them.

But your governor perhaps may still insist, and put the question, — What is then become of those immense bales of paper, which must needs have been employed in such numbers of books? Can these also be wholly annihilate, and so of a sudden, as I pretend? What shall I say in return of so invidious an objection? Books, like men their authors, have no more than one way of coming into the world, but there are ten thousand to go out of it, and return no more.

I profess to your Highness, in the integrity of my heart, that what I am going to say is literally true this minute I am writing; what revolutions may happen before it shall be ready for your perusal, I can by no means warrant; however, I beg you to accept it as a specimen of our learning, our politeness, and



our wit. I do therefore affirm, upon the word of a sincere man, that there is now actually in being a certain poet, called John Dryden, whose translation of Virgil was lately printed in a large folio, well bound, and, if diligent search were made, for aught I know, is yet to be seen. There is another, called Nahum Tate, who is ready to make oath that he has caused many reams of verse to be published, whereof both himself and his bookseller (if lawfully required) can still produce authentic copies, and therefore wonders why the world is pleased to make such a secret of it. There is a third, known by the name of Tom Durfey, a poet of a vast comprehension, a universal genius, and most profound learning. There are also one Mr. Rymer and one Mr. Dennis, most profound critics. There is a person styled Dr. Bentley, who has written near a thousand pages of immense erudition, giving a full and true account of a certain squabble of wonderful importance between himself and a bookseller; he is a writer of infinite wit and humor; no man rallies with a better grace, and in more sprightly turns. Farther, I avow to your Highness that with these eyes I have beheld the person of William Wotton, B.D., who has written a good sizable volume against a friend <sup>1</sup> of your governor (from whom, alas! he must therefore look for little favor), in a most gentlemanly style, adorned with the utmost politeness and civility, replete with discoveries equally valuable for their novelty and use, and embellished with traits of wit so poignant and so apposite that he is a worthy yokemate to his forementioned friend.

Why should I go upon farther particulars, which might fill a volume with the just eulogies of my contemporary brethren? I shall bequeath this piece of justice to a larger work, wherein I intend to write a character of the present set of wits in our nation. Their persons I shall describe particularly and at length, their genius and understandings in miniature.

In the meantime, I do here make bold to present your Highness with a faithful abstract, drawn from the universal body of all arts and sciences, intended wholly for your service and instruction. Nor do I doubt in the least but your Highness will peruse it as carefully, and make as considerable improvements, as other young princes have already done by the many volumes of late years written for a help to their studies.

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Temple, who had taken the part of antiquity in the "quarrel of the ancients and moderns," while Wotton represented the latter. See Swift's *Battle of the Books*.

That your Highness may advance in wisdom and virtue, as well as years, and at last outshine all your royal ancestors, shall be the daily prayer of, Sir,

Your Highness's most devoted, &c.

Dec. 1697.

## A TALE OF A TUB

Once upon a time, there was a man who had three sons by one wife, and all at a birth; neither could the midwife tell certainly which was the eldest. Their father died while they were young; and upon his death-bed, calling the lads to him, spoke thus:

"Sons, because I have purchased no estate, nor was born to any, I have long considered of some good legacies to bequeath you; and at last, with much care, as well as expense, have provided each of you (here they are) a new coat. Now you are to understand that these coats have two virtues contained in them: one is, that with good wearing they will last you fresh and sound as long as you live; the other is, that they will grow in the same proportion with your bodies, lengthening and widening of themselves, so as to be always fit. Here, — let me see them on you before I die. So; very well; pray, children, wear them clean, and brush them often. You will find in my will (here it is) full instructions in every particular concerning the wearing and management of your coats; wherein you must be very exact, to avoid the penalties I have appointed for every transgression or neglect, upon which your future fortunes will entirely depend. I have also commanded in my will, that you should live together in one house like brethren and friends, for then you will be sure to thrive, and not otherwise."

Here, the story says, this good father died, and the three sons went all together to seek their fortunes.

I shall not trouble you with recounting what adventures they met for the first seven years, any farther than by taking notice that they carefully observed their father's will, and kept their coats in very good order; that they traveled through several countries, encountered a reasonable quantity of giants, and slew certain dragons.

Being now arrived at the proper age for producing themselves,

they came up to town, and fell in love with the ladies, but especially three, who about that time were in chief reputation,—the Duchess d'Argent, Madame de Grands Titres, and the Countess d'Orgueil. On their first appearance, our three adventurers met with a very bad reception; and soon with great sagacity guessing out the reason, they quickly began to improve in the good qualities of the town: they writ, and rallied, and rhymed, and sung, and said, and said nothing; they drank, and fought, and slept, and swore, and took snuff; they went to new plays on the first night, haunted the chocolate-houses, beat the watch, and lay on bulks; they bilked hackney-coachmen, and ran in debt with shopkeepers; they killed bailiffs, kicked fiddlers down stairs, eat at Locket's, loitered at Will's;<sup>1</sup> they talked of the drawing-room, and never came there; dined with lords they never saw; whispered a duchess, and spoke never a word; exposed the scrawls of their laundress for billetdoux of quality; came ever just from court, and were never seen in it; attended the levee *sub dio*; <sup>2</sup> got a list of peers by heart in one company, and with great familiarity retailed them in another. Above all, they constantly attended those committees of senators who are silent in the house and loud in the coffee-house, where they nightly adjourn to chew the cud of politics, and are encompassed with a ring of disciples, who lie in wait to catch up their droppings. The three brothers had acquired forty other qualifications of the like stamp, too tedious to recount, and by consequence were justly reckoned the most accomplished persons in the town; but all would not suffice, and the ladies aforesaid continued still inflexible. To clear up which difficulty I must, with the reader's good leave and patience, have recourse to some points of weight, which the authors of that age have not sufficiently illustrated.

For about this time it happened a sect arose, whose tenets obtained and spread very far, especially in the *grand monde*, and among everybody of good fashion. They worshiped a sort of idol,<sup>3</sup> who, as their doctrine delivered, did daily create men by a kind of manufactory operation. This idol they placed in the highest part of the house, on an altar erected about three foot; he was shown in the posture of a Persian emperor, sitting

<sup>1</sup> A leading coffee-house, in Covent Garden. Locket's was a restaurant near Charing Cross.

<sup>2</sup> In the open air; i. e. they stayed in the street.

<sup>3</sup> The tailor.



on a superficies, with his legs interwoven under him. This god had a goose for his ensign; whence it is that some learned men pretend to deduce his original from Jupiter Capitolinus. At his left hand, beneath the altar, Hell seemed to open, and catch at the animals the idol was creating; to prevent which, certain of his priests hourly flung in pieces of the uninformed mass, or substance, and sometimes whole limbs already enlivened, which that horrid gulf insatiably swallowed, terrible to behold. The goose was held a subaltern divinity or *deus minorum gentium*, before whose shrine was sacrificed that creature whose hourly food is human gore, and who is in so great renown abroad for being the delight and favorite of the Egyptian Cercopithecus. Millions of these animals were cruelly slaughtered every day to appease the hunger of that consuming deity. The chief idol was also worshiped as the inventor of the yard and needle; whether as the god of seamen, or on account of certain other mystical attributes, has not been sufficiently cleared.

The worshipers of this deity had also a system of their belief, which seemed to turn upon the following fundamentals. They held the universe to be a large suit of clothes, which invests everything; that the earth is invested by the air; the air is invested by the stars; and the stars are invested by the *primum mobile*. Look on this globe of earth, you will find it to be a very complete and fashionable dress. What is that which some call land, but a fine coat faced with green? or the sea, but a waistcoat of water-tabby? Proceed to the particular works of the creation, you will find how curious journeyman Nature has been, to trim up the vegetable beaux; observe how sparkish a periwig adorns the head of a beech, and what a fine doublet of white satin is worn by the birch. To conclude from all, what is man himself but a micro-coat, or rather a complete suit of clothes with all its trimmings? As to his body, there can be no dispute; but examine even the acquirements of his mind, you will find them all contribute in their order towards furnishing out an exact dress: to instance no more, is not religion a cloak; honesty a pair of shoes worn out in the dirt; self-love a surtout; vanity a shirt; and conscience a pair of breeches?

These *postulata* being admitted, it will follow in due course of reasoning that those beings, which the world calls improperly suits of clothes, are in reality the most refined species of ani-

ma's; or, to proceed higher, that they are rational creatures, or men. For is it not manifest that they live, and move, and talk, and perform all other offices of human life? Are not beauty, and wit, and mien, and breeding, their inseparable proprieties? In short, we see nothing but them, hear nothing but them. Is it not they who walk the streets, fill up parliament-, coffee-, play-houses? It is true, indeed, that these animals, which are vulgarly called suits of clothes, or dresses, do, according to certain compositions, receive different appellations. If one of them be trimmed up with a gold chain, and a red gown, and a white rod, and a great horse, it is called a lord-mayor; if certain ermines and furs be placed in a certain position, we style them a judge; and so an apt conjunction of lawn and black satin we entitle a bishop.

Others of these professors, though agreeing in the main system, were yet more refined upon certain branches of it, and held that man was an animal compounded of two dresses, the natural and celestial suit, which were the body and the soul; that the soul was the outward, and the body the inward clothing; that the latter was *ex traduce*,<sup>1</sup> but the former of daily creation and circumfusion; this last they proved by scripture, because in them we live, and move, and have our being, as likewise by philosophy, because they are all in all, and all in every part. Besides, said they, separate these two, and you will find the body to be only a senseless unsavory carcase. By all which it is manifest that the outward dress must needs be the soul.

To this system of religion were tagged several subaltern doctrines, which were entertained with great vogue; as particularly, the faculties of the mind were deduced by the learned among them in this manner: embroidery was sheer wit; gold fringe was agreeable conversation; gold lace was repartee; a huge long periwig was humor; and a coat full of powder was very good raillery; — all which required abundance of *finesse* and *delicatesse* to manage with advantage, as well as a strict observance after times and fashions.

I have, with much pains and reading, collected out of ancient authors this short summary of a body of philosophy and divinity, which seems to have been composed by a vein and

<sup>1</sup> Received directly from the original source; an allusion to a theological dispute as to the origin of the soul.

race of thinking very different from any other systems either ancient or modern. And it was not merely to entertain or satisfy the reader's curiosity, but rather to give him light into several circumstances of the following story; that, knowing the state of dispositions and opinions in an age so remote, he may better comprehend those great events which were the issue of them. I advise therefore the courteous reader to peruse with a world of application, again and again, whatever I have written upon this matter. And leaving these broken ends, I carefully gather up the chief thread of my story and proceed.

These opinions, therefore, were so universal, as well as the practices of them, among the refined part of court and town, that our three brother-adventurers, as their circumstances then stood, were strangely at a loss. For, on the one side, the three ladies they addressed themselves to, whom we have named already, were at the very top of the fashion, and abhorred all that were below it the breadth of a hair. On the other side, their father's will was very precise, and it was the main precept in it, with the greatest penalties annexed, not to add to or diminish from their coats one thread, without a positive command in the will. Now the coats their father had left them were, it is true, of very good cloth, and besides, so neatly sewn, you would swear they were all of a piece; but at the same time very plain, and with little or no ornament; and it happened that, before they were a month in town, great shoulder-knots came up; straight all the world was shoulder-knots; — no approaching the ladies' *ruelles*<sup>1</sup> without the *quota* of shoulder-knots. "That fellow," cries one, "has no soul; where is his shoulder-knot?" Our three brethren soon discovered their want by sad experience, meeting in their walks with forty mortifications and indignities. If they went to the play-house, the door-keeper showed them into the twelve-penny gallery. If they called a boat, says a waterman, "I am first sculler." If they stepped to the Rose to take a bottle, the drawer would cry, "Friend, we sell no ale." If they went to visit a lady, a footman met them at the door, with "Pray send up your message." In this unhappy case, they went immediately to consult their father's will, read it over and over, but not a word of the shoulder-knot. What should they do? What temper should they find? Obe-

<sup>1</sup> The bed-room alcoves used as reception-rooms by French ladies.



dience was absolutely necessary, and yet shoulder-knots appeared extremely requisite. After much thought, one of the brothers, who happened to be more book-learned than the other two, said he had found an expedient. "It is true," said he, "there is nothing here in this will, *totidem verbis*, making mention of shoulder-knots; but I dare conjecture, we may find them *inclusive*, or *totidem syllabis*." This distinction was immediately approved by all, and so they fell again to examine the will; but their evil star had so directed the matter that the first syllable was not to be found in the whole writings. Upon which disappointment, he who found the former evasion took heart, and said, "Brothers, there are yet hopes; for though we cannot find them *totidem verbis*, nor *totidem syllabis*, I dare engage we shall make them out *tertio modo*, or *totidem literis*." This discovery was also highly commended, upon which they fell once more to the scrutiny, and picked out S, H, O, U, L, D, E, R; when the same planet, enemy to their repose, had wonderfully contrived that a K was not to be found. Here was a weighty difficulty! But the distinguishing brother, for whom we shall hereafter find a name, now his hand was in, proved by a very good argument that K was a modern, illegitimate letter, unknown to the learned ages, nor anywhere to be found in ancient manuscripts. "'T is true," said he, "Calendæ hath in Q. V. C.<sup>1</sup> been sometimes written with a K, but erroneously; for in the best copies it has been ever spelt with a C." And, by consequence, it was a gross mistake in our language to spell knot with a K; but that from henceforward he would take care it should be written with a C. Upon this all farther difficulty vanished; shoulder-knots were made clearly out to be *jure paterno*; and our three gentlemen swaggered with as large and as flaunting ones as the best. But, as human happiness is of a very short duration, so in those days were human fashions, upon which it entirely depends. Shoulder-knots had their time, and we must now imagine them in their decline; for a certain lord came just from Paris, with fifty yards of gold lace upon his coat, exactly trimmed after the court fashion of that month. In two days all mankind appeared closed up in bars of gold lace; whoever durst peep abroad without his complement of gold lace, was ill received among the women. What should our three knights do in this momentous affair? They had suffi-

<sup>1</sup> Some ancient MSS. (*quibusdam veteribus codicibus*).

ciently strained a point already in the affair of shoulder-knots; upon recourse to the will, nothing appeared there but *altum silentium*. That of the shoulder-knots was a loose, flying, circumstantial point; but this of gold lace seemed too considerable an alteration without better warrant; it did *aliquo modo essentia adherere*,<sup>1</sup> and therefore required a positive precept. But about this time it fell out that the learned brother aforesaid had read *Aristotelis dialectica*, and especially that wonderful piece *de interpretatione*, which has the faculty of teaching its readers to find out a meaning in everything but itself, — like commentators on the *Revelations*, who proceed prophets without understanding a syllable of the text. “Brothers,” said he, “you are to be informed that of wills *duo sunt genera*, nuncupatory and scriptory; that in the scriptory will here before us, there is no precept or mention about gold lace, *conceditur*; but, *si idem affirmetur de nuncupatorio, negatur*. For, brothers, if you remember, we heard a fellow say, when we were boys, that he heard my father’s man say that he heard my father say that he would advise his sons to get gold lace on their coats, as soon as ever they could procure money to buy it.” “By G—! that is very true,” cried the other. “I remember it perfectly well,” said the third. And so without more ado got the largest gold lace in the parish, and walked about as fine as lords.

A while after there came up all in fashion a pretty sort of flame-colored satin for linings, and the mercer brought a pattern of it immediately to our three gentlemen. “An please your worships,” said he, “my Lord C—— and Sir J. W. had linings out of this very piece last night; it takes wonderfully, and I shall not have a remnant left enough to make my wife a pin-cushion, by to-morrow morning at ten o’clock.” Upon this they fell again to rummage the will, because the present case also required a positive precept, the lining being held by orthodox writers to be of the essence of the coat. After long search, they could fix upon nothing to the matter in hand, except a short advice of their father in the will, to take care of fire, and put out their candles before they went to sleep. This, though a good deal for the purpose, and helping very far towards self-conviction, yet not seeming wholly of force to establish a command

<sup>1</sup> This and the Latin phrases that follow burlesque the jargon of the Schoolmen of the mediæval church.

(being resolved to avoid farther scruple, as well as future occasion for scandal), says he that was the scholar, "I remember to have read in wills of a codicil annexed, which is indeed a part of the will, and what it contains has equal authority with the rest. Now I have been considering of this same will here before us, and I cannot reckon it to be complete for want of such a codicil. I will therefore fasten one in its proper place very dexterously; I have had it by me some time; it was written by a dog-keeper of my grandfather's, and talks a great deal, as good luck would have it, of this very flame-colored satin." The project was immediately approved by the other two; an old parchment scroll was tagged on according to art, in the form of a codicil annexed, and the satin bought and worn.

Next winter a player, hired for the purpose by the corporation of fringe-makers, acted his part in a new comedy, all covered with silver fringe, and, according to the laudable custom, gave rise to that fashion. Upon which the brothers, consulting their father's will, to their great astonishment found these words: "*Item*, I charge and command my said three sons to wear no sort of silver fringe upon or about their said coats, &c.," with a penalty, in case of disobedience, too long here to insert. However, after some pause, the brother so often mentioned for his erudition, who was well skilled in criticisms, had found in a certain author, which he said should be nameless, that the same word which, in the will, is called fringe, does also signify a broom-stick, and doubtless ought to have the same interpretation in this paragraph. This another of the brothers disliked, because of that epithet silver, which could not, he humbly conceived, in propriety of speech, be reasonably applied to a broom-stick; but it was replied upon him that his epithet was understood in a mythological and allegorical sense. However, he objected again, why their father should forbid them to wear a broom-stick on their coats, a caution that seemed unnatural and impertinent? — upon which he was taken up short, as one who spoke irreverently of a mystery, which doubtless was very useful and significant, but ought not to be over-curiously pried into, or nicely reasoned upon. And, in short, their father's authority being now considerably sunk, this expedient was allowed to serve as a lawful dispensation for wearing their full proportion of silver fringe.



A while after was revived an old fashion, long antiquated, of embroidery with Indian figures of men, women, and children. Here they had no occasion to examine the will; they remembered but too well how their father had always abhorred this fashion; that he made several paragraphs on purpose, importing his utter detestation of it, and bestowing his everlasting curse to his sons, whenever they should wear it. For all this, in a few days they appeared higher in the fashion than anybody else in the town. But they solved the matter by saying that these figures were not at all the same with those that were formerly worn, and were meant in the will. Besides, they did not wear them in the sense as forbidden by their father, but as they were a commendable custom, and of great use to the public. That these rigorous clauses in the will did therefore require some allowance, and a favorable interpretation, and ought to be understood *cum grano salis*.

But fashions perpetually altering in that age, the scholastic brother grew weary of searching farther evasions, and solving everlasting contradictions. Resolved, therefore, at all hazards, to comply with the modes of the world, they concerted matters together, and agreed unanimously to lock up their father's will in a strong box, brought out of Greece or Italy, I have forgotten which, and trouble themselves no farther to examine it, but only refer to its authority whenever they thought fit. In consequence whereof, a while after it grew a general mode to wear an infinite number of points, most of them tagged with silver; upon which, the scholar pronounced *ex cathedra* that points were absolutely *jure paterno*, as they might very well remember. It is true, indeed, the fashion prescribed somewhat more than were directly named in the will; however, that they, as heirs-general of their father, had power to make and add certain clauses for public emolument, though not deducible, *totidem verbis*, from the letter of the will, or else *multa absurda sequerentur*. This was understood for canonical, and therefore, on the following Sunday, they came to church all covered with points.

The learned brother, so often mentioned, was reckoned the best scholar in all that, or the next street to it; insomuch as, having run something behind-hand in the world, he obtained the favor of a certain lord to receive him into his house, and to

teach his children. A while after the lord died, and he, by long practice of his father's will, found the way of contriving a deed of conveyance of that house to himself and his heirs; upon which he took possession, turned the young squires out, and received his brothers in their stead.

I have now, with much pains and study, conducted the reader to a period where he must expect to hear of great revolutions. For no sooner had our learned brother, so often mentioned, got a warm house of his own over his head, than he began to look big, and take mightily upon him; insomuch that unless the gentle reader, out of his great candor, will please a little to exalt his idea, I am afraid he will henceforth hardly know the hero of the play, when he happens to meet him; his part, his dress, and his mien being so much altered.

He told his brothers, he would have them to know that he was their elder, and consequently his father's sole heir; nay, a while after, he would not allow them to call him brother, but Mr. Peter; and then he must be styled Father Peter; and sometimes, My Lord Peter. . . .

In short, Peter grew so scandalous that all the neighborhood began in plain words to say he was no better than a knave. And his two brothers, long weary of his ill usage, resolved at last to leave him; but first they humbly desired a copy of their father's will, which had now lain by neglected time out of mind. Instead of granting this request, he called them damned sons of whores, rogues, traitors, and the rest of the vile names he could muster up. However, while he was abroad one day upon his projects, the two youngsters watched their opportunity, made a shift to come at the will, and took a *copia vera*,<sup>1</sup> by which they presently saw how grossly they had been abused; their father having left them equal heirs, and strictly commanded that whatever they got should lie in common among them all. Pursuant to which, their next enterprise was to break open the cellar-door, and get a little good drink, to spirit and comfort their hearts. . . . While all this was in agitation, there enters a solicitor from Newgate, desiring Lord Peter would please procure a pardon for a thief that was to be hanged to-morrow. But the two brothers told him he was a coxcomb to seek pardons from a fellow who deserved to be hanged much better than his client,

<sup>1</sup> True copy.

and discovered all the method of that imposture, in the same form I delivered it a while ago, advising the solicitor to put his friend upon obtaining a pardon from the king. In the midst of all this clutter and revolution, in comes Peter with a file of dragoons at his heels, and, gathering from all hands what was in the wind, he and his gang, after several millions of scurrilities and curses, not very important here to repeat, by main force very fairly kicked them both out of doors, and would never let them come under his roof from that day to this. . . .

The two exiles, so nearly united in fortune and interest, took a lodging together; where, at their first leisure, they began to reflect on the numberless misfortunes and vexations of their past life, and could not tell on the sudden to what failure in their conduct they ought to impute them; when, after some recollection, they called to mind the copy of their father's will, which they had so happily recovered. This was immediately produced, and a firm resolution taken between them to alter whatever was already amiss, and reduce all their future measures to the strictest obedience prescribed therein. The main body of the will (as the reader cannot easily have forgot) consisted in certain admirable rules about the wearing of their coats; in the perusal whereof, the two brothers, at every period, duly comparing the doctrine with the practice, there was never seen a wider difference between two things, — horrible downright transgressions of every point. Upon which they both resolved, without further delay, to fall immediately upon reducing the whole, exactly after their father's model.

But here it is good to stop the hasty reader, ever impatient to see the end of an adventure, before we writers can duly prepare him for it. I am to record that these two brothers began to be distinguished at this time by certain names. One of them desired to be called Martin, and the other took the appellation of Jack. These two had lived in much friendship and agreement under the tyranny of their brother Peter, as it is the talent of fellow-sufferers to do, — men in misfortune being like men in the dark, to whom all colors are the same; but when they came forward into the world, and began to display themselves to each other, and to the light, their complexions appeared extremely different; which the present posture of their affairs gave them sudden opportunity to discover.



But here the severe reader may justly tax me as a writer of short memory, a deficiency to which a true modern cannot but, of necessity, be a little subject. Because memory, being an employment of the mind upon things past, is a faculty for which the learned in our illustrious age have no manner of occasion, who deal entirely with invention, and strike all things out of themselves, or at least by collision from each other; upon which account we think it highly reasonable to produce our great forgetfulness as an argument unanswerable for our great wit. I ought in method to have informed the reader, about fifty pages ago, of a fancy Lord Peter took, and infused into his brothers, to wear on their coats whatever trimmings came up in fashion; never pulling off any, as they went out of the mode, but keeping on all together, which amounted in time to a medley the most antic you can possibly conceive; and this to a degree that, upon the time of their falling out, there was hardly a thread of the original coat to be seen, but an infinite quantity of lace and ribbons, and fringe, and embroidery, and points, — I mean only those tagged with silver, for the rest fell off. Now this material circumstance, having been forgot in due place, as good fortune hath ordered, comes in very properly here, when the two brothers are just going to reform their vestures into the primitive state prescribed by their father's will.

They both unanimously entered upon this great work, looking sometimes on their coats, and sometimes on the will. Martin laid the first hand; at one twitch brought off a large handful of points, and with a second pull stripped away ten dozen yards of fringe. But when he had gone thus far, he demurred a while. He knew very well there yet remained a great deal more to be done; however, the first heat being over, his violence began to cool, and he resolved to proceed more moderately in the rest of the work; having already narrowly escaped a swinging rent in pulling off the points, which, being tagged with silver (as we have observed before), the judicious workman had, with much sagacity, double sewn, to preserve them from falling. Resolving therefore to rid his coat of a huge quantity of gold lace, he picked up the stitches with much caution, and diligently gleaned out all the loose threads as he went, which proved to be a work of time. Then he fell about the embroidered Indian figures of men, women, and children, against which, as you have heard in

its due place, their father's testament was extremely exact and severe; these, with much dexterity and application, were, after a while, quite eradicated, or utterly defaced. For the rest, where he observed the embroidery to be worked so close as not to be got away without damaging the cloth, or where it served to hide or strengthen any flaw in the body of the coat, contracted by the perpetual tampering of workmen upon it, he concluded the wisest course was to let it remain, resolving in no case whatsoever that the substance of the stuff should suffer injury; which he thought the best method for serving the true intent and meaning of his father's will. And this is the nearest account I have been able to collect of Martin's proceedings upon this great revolution.

But his brother Jack, whose adventures will be so extraordinary as to furnish a great part in the remainder of this discourse, entered upon the matter with other thoughts, and a quite different spirit. For the memory of Lord Peter's injuries produced a degree of hatred and spite, which had a much greater share of inciting him than any regards after his father's commands, since these appeared, at best, only secondary and subservient to the other. . . . Having thus kindled and inflamed himself as high as possible, and by consequence in a delicate temper for beginning a reformation, he set about the work immediately, and in three minutes made more dispatch than Martin had done in as many hours. For, courteous reader, you are given to understand that zeal is never so highly obliged as when you set it a-tearing; and Jack, who doted on that quality in himself, allowed it at this time its full swing. Thus it happened that, stripping down a parcel of gold lace a little too hastily, he rent the main body of his coat from top to bottom; and, whereas his talent was not of the happiest in taking up a stitch, he knew no better way than to darn it again with packthread and a skewer. But the matter was yet infinitely worse (I record it with tears) when he proceeded to the embroidery; for, being clumsy by nature, and of temper impatient, — withal, beholding millions of stitches that required the nicest hand, and sedatest constitution, to extricate, — in a great rage he tore off the whole piece, cloth and all, and flung it into the kennel; and furiously thus continuing his career, — “Ah, good brother Martin,” said he, “do as I do, for the love of God! Strip, tear, pull, rend, flay off

all, that we may appear as unlike the rogue Peter as it is possible. I would not, for a hundred pounds, carry the least mark about me, that might give occasion to the neighbors of suspecting that I was related to such a rascal." . . .

Jack had provided a fair copy of his father's will, engrossed in form upon a large skin of parchment; and, resolving to act the part of a most dutiful son, he became the fondest creature of it imaginable. For although, as I have often told the reader, it consisted wholly in certain plain, easy directions, about the management and wearing of their coats, with legacies and penalties in case of obedience or neglect, yet he began to entertain a fancy that the matter was deeper and darker, and therefore must needs have a great deal more of mystery at the bottom. "Gentlemen," said he, "I will prove this very skin of parchment to be meat, drink, and cloth; to be the philosopher's stone, and the universal medicine." In consequence of which raptures he resolved to make use of it in the most necessary, as well as the most paltry occasions of life. He had a way of working it into any shape he pleased, so that it served him for a nightcap when he went to bed, and for an umbrella in rainy weather. He would lap a piece of it about a sore toe, or, when he had fits, burn two inches under his nose; or, if anything lay heavy on his stomach, scrape off, and swallow as much of the powder as would lie on a silver penny; they were all infallible remedies. With analogy to these refinements, his common talk and conversation ran wholly in the phrase of his will, and he circumscribed the utmost of his eloquence within that compass, not daring to let slip a syllable without authority from thence.

He made it a part of his religion never to say grace to his meat; nor could all the world persuade him, as the common phrase is, to eat his victuals like a Christian.

He bore a strange kind of appetite to snap-dragon, and to the livid snuffs of a burning candle, which he would catch and swallow with an agility wonderful to conceive; and, by this procedure, maintained a perpetual flame in his belly, which, issuing in a glowing steam from both his eyes, as well as his nostrils and his mouth, made his head appear in a dark night like the skull of an ass, wherein a roguish boy hath conveyed a farthing candle, to the terror of His Majesty's liege subjects. Therefore



he made use of no other expedient to light himself home, but was wont to say that a wise man was his own lantern.

He would shut his eyes as he walked along the streets, and if he happened to bounce his head against a post, or fall into a kennel (as he seldom missed either to do one or both), he would tell the gibing prentices, who looked on, that he submitted with entire resignation, as to a trip, or a blow of fate, with whom he found, by long experience, how vain it was either to wrestle or to cuff; and whoever durst undertake to do either, would be sure to come off with a swinging fall, or a bloody nose. "It was ordained," said he, "some few days before the creation, that my nose and this very post should have a rencounter; and therefore nature thought fit to send us both into the world in the same age, and to make us countrymen and fellow-citizens. Now had my eyes been open, it is very likely the business might have been a great deal worse; for how many a confounded slip is daily got by a man with all his foresight about him? Besides, the eyes of the understanding see best, when those of the senses are out of the way; and therefore blind men are observed to tread their steps with much more caution, and conduct, and judgment, than those who rely with too much confidence upon the virtue of the visual nerve, which every little accident shakes out of order, and a drop, or a film, can wholly disconcert; — like a lantern among a pack of roaring bullies when they scour the streets, exposing its owner and itself to outward kicks and buffets, which both might have escaped, if the vanity of appearing would have suffered them to walk in the dark. But further, if we examine the conduct of these boasted lights, it will prove yet a great deal worse than their fortune. 'T is true, I have broke my nose against this post, because Providence either forgot, or did not think it convenient, to twitch me by the elbow, and give me notice to avoid it. But let not this encourage either the present age, or posterity, to trust their noses into the keeping of their eyes, which may prove the fairest way of losing them for good and all. For, O ye eyes, ye blind guides! miserable guardians are ye of our frail noses; ye, I say, who fasten upon the first precipice in view, and then tow our wretched willing bodies after you, to the very brink of destruction; but, alas! that brink is rotten, our feet slip, and we tumble down prone into a gulf, without one hospitable shrub in the

way to break the fall; a fall, to which not any nose of mortal make is equal, except that of the giant Laurcalco, who was lord of the silver bridge. Most properly therefore, O eyes! and with great justice, may you be compared to those foolish lights which conduct men through dirt and darkness, till they fall into a deep pit or a noisome bog."

This I have produced as a scantling of Jack's great eloquence, and the force of his reasoning upon such abtruse matters. . . .

A DIGRESSION CONCERNING THE ORIGINAL, THE USE, AND IMPROVEMENT OF MADNESS, IN A COMMONWEALTH

. . . The reader will, I am sure, agree with me in the conclusion that, if the moderns mean by madness only a disturbance or transposition of the brain, by force of certain vapors issuing up from the lower faculties, then hath this madness been the parent of all those mighty revolutions that have happened in empire, philosophy, and in religion. For the brain, in its natural position and state of serenity, disposes its owner to pass his life in the common forms, without any thoughts of subduing multitudes to his own power, his reasons, or his visions; and the more he shapes his understanding by the pattern of human learning, the less he is inclined to form parties, after his particular notions, because that instructs him in his private infirmities, as well as in the stubborn ignorance of the people.

But when a man's fancy gets astride on his reason, when imagination is at cuffs with the senses, and common understanding, as well as common sense, is kicked out of doors, the first proselyte he makes is himself; and when that is once compassed, the difficulty is not so great in bringing over others, a strong delusion always operating from without as vigorously as from within. For cant and vision are to the ear and the eye the same that tickling is to the touch. Those entertainments and pleasures we most value in life are such as dupe and play the wag with the senses. For, if we take an examination of what is generally understood by happiness, as it hath respect either to the understanding or the senses, we shall find all its properties and adjuncts will herd under this short definition, — that it is a perpetual possession of being well deceived. And, first, with relation to the mind or understanding, 't is manifest what mighty advantages fiction has over truth; and the reason is just

at our elbow, — because imagination can build nobler scenes, and produce more wonderful revolutions, than fortune or nature will be at expense to furnish. Nor is mankind so much to blame in his choice, thus determining him, if we consider that the debate merely lies between things past and things conceived; and so the question is only this, — whether things that have place in the imagination may not as properly be said to exist as those that are seated in the memory; which may be justly held in the affirmative, and very much to the advantage of the former, since this is acknowledged to be the womb of things, and the other allowed to be no more than the grave. Again, if we take this definition of happiness, and examine it with reference to the senses, it will be acknowledged wonderfully adapt. How fading and insipid do all objects accost us, that are not conveyed in the vehicle of delusion! How shrunk is everything, as it appears in the glass of nature! So that if it were not for the assistance of artificial mediums, false lights, refracted angles, varnish and tinsel, there would be a mighty level in the felicity and enjoyments of mortal men. If this were seriously considered by the world, as I have a certain reason to suspect it hardly will, men would no longer reckon among their high points of wisdom, the art of exposing weak sides, and publishing infirmities, — an employment, in my opinion, neither better nor worse than that of unmasking, which, I think, has never been allowed <sup>1</sup> fair usage, either in the world or the playhouse.

In the proportion that credulity is a more peaceful possession of the mind than curiosity, so far preferable is that wisdom which converses about the surface, to that pretended philosophy which enters into the depth of things, and then comes gravely back with informations and discoveries that in the inside they are good for nothing. The two senses to which all objects first address themselves are the sight and the touch; these never examine farther than the color, the shape, the size, and whatever other qualities dwell, or are drawn by art, upon the outward of bodies; and then comes reason officiously, with tools for cutting and opening and mangling and piercing, offering to demonstrate that they are not of the same consistence quite through. Now I take all this to be the last degree of pervert-

<sup>1</sup> Considered (to be).



ing nature, one of whose eternal laws it is, to put her best furniture forward. And therefore, in order to save the charges of all such expensive anatomy for the time to come, I do here think fit to inform the reader that, in such conclusions as these, reason is certainly in the right, and that in most corporeal beings which have fallen under my cognizance, the outside has been infinitely preferable to the in; whereof I have been farther convinced from some late experiments. Last week I saw a woman flayed, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her person for the worse. Yesterday I ordered the carcase of a beau to be stripped in my presence, when we were all amazed to find so many unsuspected faults under one suit of clothes. Then I laid open his brain, his heart, and his spleen; but I plainly perceived at every operation, that the farther we proceeded, we found the defects increase upon us in number and bulk. From all which, I justly formed this conclusion to myself, that whatever philosopher or projector can find out an art to solder and patch up the flaws and imperfections of nature, will deserve much better of mankind, and teach us a more useful science, than that so much in present esteem, of widening and exposing them, like him who held anatomy to be the ultimate end of physic. And he whose fortunes and dispositions have placed him in a convenient station to enjoy the fruits of this noble art, — he that can, with Epicurus, content his ideas with the films and images that fly off upon his senses from the superficies of things, — such a man, truly wise, creams off nature, leaving the sour and the dregs for philosophy and reason to lap up. This is the sublime and refined point of felicity, called the possession of being well deceived, — the serene, peaceful state of being a fool among knaves.

But to return to madness. It is certain that, according to the system I have above deduced, every species thereof proceeds from a redundancy of vapors. Therefore, as some kinds of frenzy give double strength to the sinews, so there are of other species which add vigor, and life, and spirit to the brain. Now it usually happens that these active spirits, getting possession of the brain, resemble those that haunt other waste and empty dwellings, which, for want of business, either vanish, and carry away a piece of the house, or else stay at home and fling it all out of the windows. By which are mystically displayed two

principal branches of madness, and which some philosophers, not considering so well as I, have mistook to be different in their causes, over-hastily assigning the first to deficiency and the other to redundance.

I think it therefore manifest, from what I have here advanced, that the main point of skill and address is to furnish employment for this redundancy of vapor, and prudently to adjust the seasons of it; by which means it may certainly become of cardinal and catholic emolument in a commonwealth. Thus one man, choosing a proper juncture, leaps into a gulf, from thence proceeds a hero, and is called the savior of his country; another achieves the same enterprise, but, unluckily timing it, has left the brand of madness fixed as a reproach upon his memory. Upon so nice a distinction are we taught to repeat the name of Curtius with reverence and love, that of Empedocles with hatred and contempt. Thus also it is usually conceived that the elder Brutus only personated the fool and madman for the good of the public; but this was nothing else than a redundancy of the same vapor long misapplied, called by the Latins *ingenium par negotiis*, — or, to translate it as nearly as I can, a sort of frenzy, never in its right element, till you take it up in business of the state.

Upon all which, and many other reasons of equal weight, though not equally curious, I do here gladly embrace an opportunity I have long sought for, of recommending it as a very noble undertaking to Sir Edward Seymour, Sir Christopher Musgrave, Sir John Bowls, John How, Esq.,<sup>1</sup> and other patriots concerned, that they would move for leave to bring in a bill for appointing commissioners to inspect into Bedlam<sup>2</sup> and the parts adjacent; who shall be empowered to send for persons, papers, and records; to examine into the merits and qualifications of every student and professor; to observe with utmost exactness their several dispositions and behavior; by which means duly distinguishing and adapting their talents, they might produce admirable instruments for the several offices in a state. . . .

Is any student tearing his straw in piecemeal, swearing and blaspheming, biting his grate, foaming at the mouth? Let the right worshipful the Commissioners of Inspection give him a regiment of dragoons, and send him into Flanders among the

<sup>1</sup> Leading Tories.

<sup>2</sup> The insane asylum.

rest. Is another eternally talking, sputtering, gaping, bawling, in a sound without period or article? What wonderful talents are here mislaid! Let him be furnished immediately with a green bag and papers, and threepence in his pocket, and away with him to Westminster Hall.<sup>1</sup> . . . Accost the hole of another kennel (first stopping your nose), you will behold a surly, gloomy, nasty, slovenly mortal. The student of this apartment is very sparing of his words, but somewhat over-liberal of his breath; he holds his hand out ready to receive your penny, and immediately upon receipt withdraws to his former occupations. Now is it not amazing to think the Society of Warwick Lane<sup>2</sup> should have no more concern for the recovery of so useful a member? who, if one may judge from these appearances, would become the greatest ornament to that illustrious body? . . .

AN ARGUMENT TO PROVE 'THAT  
THE ABOLISHING OF CHRISTIANITY IN ENGLAND  
MAY, AS THINGS NOW STAND, BE ATTENDED WITH  
SOME INCONVENIENCES, AND PERHAPS NOT  
PRODUCE THOSE MANY GOOD EFFECTS  
PROPOSED THEREBY

1708

[This was one of several pamphlets by Swift on religious subjects which appeared in 1708. It represents his work in defense of the Church of England, especially as opposed to the Deists, who at this time were becoming influential, as the *Tale of a Tub* had been directed against Roman Catholics and Dissenters. Leading deistical writers are referred to in the tract: Toland, author of *Christianity not Mysteriorious* (1695), and Tindal, author of *Rights of the Christian Church* (1706); together with Dr. William Coward, who had published an essay denying immortality (1702). For the student of literature the importance of the pamphlet is in its exhibition of Swift's masterful irony.]

I AM very sensible what a weakness and presumption it is to reason against the general humor and disposition of the world. I remember it was with great justice, and due regard to the freedom both of the public and the press, forbidden upon several penalties to write, or discourse, or lay wagers against the Union, even before it was confirmed by Parliament, because

<sup>1</sup> Where the law courts sat.

<sup>2</sup> The College of Physicians.



that was looked upon as a design to oppose the current of the people, — which, besides the folly of it, is a manifest breach of the fundamental law that makes this majority of opinion the voice of God. In like manner, and for the very same reasons, it may perhaps be neither safe nor prudent to argue against the abolishing of Christianity, at a juncture when all parties seem so unanimously determined upon the point, as we cannot but allow from their actions, their discourses, and their writings. However, I know not how, whether from the affectation of singularity, or the perverseness of human nature, but so it unhappily falls out, that I cannot be entirely of this opinion. Nay, though I were sure an order were issued for my immediate prosecution by the Attorney-General, I should still confess that, in the present posture of our affairs at home or abroad, I do not yet see the absolute necessity of extirpating the Christian religion from among us.

This may perhaps appear too great a paradox even for our wise and paradoxical age to endure; therefore I shall handle it with all tenderness, and with the utmost deference to that great and profound majority which is of another sentiment.

And yet the curious may please to observe how much the genius of a nation is liable to alter in half an age. I have heard it affirmed for certain, by some very old people, that the contrary opinion was even in their memories as much in vogue as the other is now, and that a project for the abolishing of Christianity would then have appeared as singular, and been thought as absurd, as it would be at this time to write or discourse in its defense.

Therefore I freely own that all appearances are against me. The system of the gospel, after the fate of other systems, is generally antiquated and exploded; and the mass or body of the common people, among whom it seems to have had its latest credit, are now grown as much ashamed of it as their betters; opinions, like fashions, always descending from those of quality to the middle sort, and thence to the vulgar, where at length they are dropped and vanish.

But here I would not be mistaken, and must therefore be so bold as to borrow a distinction from the writers on the other side, when they make a difference between nominal and real Trinitarians. I hope no reader imagines me so weak to stand

up in the defense of real Christianity, such as used, in primitive times (if we may believe the authors of those ages), to have an influence upon men's belief and actions. To offer at the restoring of that, would indeed be a wild project; it would be to dig up foundations; to destroy, at one blow, all the wit, and half the learning, of the kingdom; to break the entire frame and constitution of things; to ruin trade, extinguish arts and sciences, with the professors of them; in short, to turn our courts, exchanges, and shops, into deserts; and would be full as absurd as the proposal of Horace, where he advises the Romans, all in a body, to leave their city, and seek a new seat in some remote part of the world, by way of cure for the corruption of their manners.

Therefore I think this caution was in itself altogether unnecessary (which I have inserted only to prevent all possibility of caviling), since every candid reader will easily understand my discourse to be intended only in defense of nominal Christianity; the other having been for some time wholly laid aside by general consent, as utterly inconsistent with our present schemes of wealth and power.

But why we should therefore cast off the name and title of Christians, although the general opinion and resolution be so violent for it, I confess I cannot (with submission) apprehend; nor is the consequence necessary. However, since the undertakers propose such wonderful advantages to the nation by this project, and advance many plausible objections against the system of Christianity, I shall briefly consider the strength of both, fairly allow them their greatest weight, and offer such answers as I think most reasonable. After which I will beg leave to show what inconveniences may possibly happen by such an innovation, in the present posture of our affairs.

First, one great advantage proposed by the abolishing of Christianity is, that it would very much enlarge and establish liberty of conscience, that great bulwark of our nation, and of the Protestant religion, which is still too much limited by priestcraft, notwithstanding all the good intentions of the legislature, as we have lately found by a severe instance. For it is confidently reported that two young gentlemen of real hopes, bright wit, and profound judgment, who, upon a thorough examination of causes and effects, and by the mere force of

natural abilities, without the least tincture of learning, having made a discovery that there was no God, and generously communicating their thoughts for the good of the public, were some time ago, by an unparalleled severity, and upon I know not what obsolete law, broke<sup>1</sup> for blasphemy. And, as it has been wisely observed, if persecution once begins, no man alive knows how far it may reach, or where it will end.

In answer to all which, with deference to wiser judgments, I think this rather shows the necessity of a nominal religion among us. Great wits love to be free with the highest objects; and if they cannot be allowed a God to revile or renounce, they will speak evil of dignities, abuse the government, and reflect upon the ministry; which I am sure few will deny to be of much more pernicious consequence, — according to the saying of Tiberius, *deorum offensa diis curæ*.<sup>2</sup> As to the particular fact related, I think it is not fair to argue from one instance; perhaps another cannot be produced; yet (to the comfort of all those who may be apprehensive of persecution) blasphemy, we know, is freely spoken a million of times in every coffeehouse and tavern, or wherever else good company meet. It must be allowed, indeed, that to break an English free-born officer, only for blasphemy, was, to speak the gentlest of such an action, a very high strain of absolute power. Little can be said in excuse for the general; perhaps he was afraid it might give offense to the allies, among whom, for aught we know, it may be the custom of the country to believe a God. But if he argued, as some have done, upon a mistaken principle, that an officer who is guilty of speaking blasphemy may some time or other proceed so far as to raise a mutiny, the consequence is by no means to be admitted; for surely the commander of an English army is likely to be but ill obeyed, whose soldiers fear and reverence him as little as they do a Deity.

It is farther objected against the gospel system, that it obliges men to the belief of things too difficult for free-thinkers, and such who have shaken off the prejudices that usually cling to a confined education. To which I answer, that men should be cautious how they raise objections which reflect upon the wisdom of the nation. Is not everybody freely allowed to believe whatever he pleases, and to publish his belief to the world

<sup>1</sup> Cashiered.

<sup>2</sup> "Wrongs done to the gods are the gods' concern."



whenever he thinks fit, especially if it serves to strengthen the party which is in the right? Would any indifferent foreigner, who should read the trumpery lately written by Asgill,<sup>1</sup> Tindal, Toland, Coward, and forty more, imagine the gospel to be our rule of faith, and confirmed by parliaments? Does any man either believe, or say he believes, or desire to have it thought that he says he believes, one syllable of the matter? And is any man worse received upon that score, or does he find his want of nominal faith a disadvantage to him, in the pursuit of any civil or military employment? What if there be an old dormant statute or two against him, are they not now obsolete to a degree that Empson and Dudley<sup>2</sup> themselves, if they were now alive, would find it impossible to put them in execution?

It is likewise urged that there are, by computation, in this kingdom, above ten thousand parsons, whose revenues, added to those of my lords the bishops, would suffice to maintain at least two hundred young gentlemen of wit and pleasure and free-thinking, enemies to priestcraft, narrow principles, pedantry, and prejudices, who might be an ornament to the court and town; and then again, so great a number of able (bodied) divines might be a recruit to our fleet and armies. This indeed appears to be a consideration of some weight; but then, on the other side, several things deserve to be considered likewise: as first, whether it may not be thought necessary that in certain tracts of country, like what we call parishes, there shall be one man at least of abilities to read and write. Then it seems a wrong computation that the revenues of the church throughout this island would be large enough to maintain two hundred young gentlemen, or even half that number, after the present refined way of living, — that is, to allow each of them such a rent as, in the modern form of speech, would make them easy. But still there is in this project a greater mischief behind; and we ought to beware of the woman's folly who killed the hen that every morning laid her a golden egg. For pray what would become of the race of men in the next age, if we had nothing to trust beside the scrofulous, consumptive productions, furnished by our men of wit and pleasure, when, having squandered away their vigor, health, and estates, they are forced, by some dis-

<sup>1</sup> An eccentric writer, whose book called *An Argument to prove that death is not obligatory on Christians*, was burned by order of the House of Commons.

<sup>2</sup> Extortionate tax-collectors for Henry VII.

agreeable marriage, to piece up their broken fortunes, and entail rottenness and politeness on their posterity? Now, here are ten thousand persons reduced, by the wise regulations of Henry the Eighth,<sup>1</sup> to the necessity of a low diet and moderate exercise, who are the only great restorers of our breed, without which the nation would, in an age or two, become one great hospital.

Another advantage proposed by the abolishing of Christianity is the clear gain of one day in seven, which is now entirely lost, and consequently the kingdom one seventh less considerable in trade, business, and pleasure; beside the loss to the public of so many stately structures, now in the hands of the clergy, which might be converted into playhouses, market-houses, exchanges, common dormitories, and other public edifices.

I hope I shall be forgiven a hard word, if I call this a perfect cavil. I readily own there has been an old custom, time out of mind, for people to assemble in the churches every Sunday, and that shops are still frequently shut, in order, as it is conceived, to preserve the memory of that ancient practice; but how this can prove a hindrance to business or pleasure, is hard to imagine. What if the men of pleasure are forced, one day in the week, to game at home instead of the chocolate-houses? are not the taverns and coffee-houses open? Can there be a more convenient season for taking a dose of physic? Is not that the chief day for traders to sum up the accounts of the week, and for lawyers to prepare their briefs? But I would fain know how it can be pretended that the churches are misapplied? Where are more appointments and rendezvouses of gallantry? Where more care to appear in the foremost box, with greater advantage of dress? where more meetings for business? where more bargains driven of all sorts? and where so many conveniences or enticements to sleep?

There is one advantage, greater than any of the foregoing, proposed by the abolishing of Christianity, — that it will utterly extinguish parties among us, by removing those factious distinctions of high and low church, of Whig, and Tory, Presbyterian and Church of England, which are now so many grievous clogs upon public proceedings, and are apt to dispose men to prefer the gratifying of themselves, or depressing of their adversaries, before the most important interest of the state.

<sup>1</sup> Depriving the church of its revenues.

I confess, if it were certain that so great an advantage would redound to the nation by this expedient, I would submit and be silent; but will any man say that if the words *whoring, drinking, cheating, lying, stealing* were by Act of Parliament ejected out of the English tongue and dictionaries, we should all awake next morning chaste and temperate, honest and just, and lovers of truth? Is this a fair consequence? Or, if the physicians would forbid us to pronounce the words *gout, rheumatism, and stone*, would that expedient serve, like so many talismans, to destroy the diseases themselves? Are party and faction in men's hearts no deeper than phrases borrowed from religion, or founded upon no firmer principles? And is our language so poor that we cannot find other terms to express them? Are *envy, pride, avarice*, and *ambition* such ill nomenclators that they cannot furnish appellations for their owners? Will not *heydukes* and *mamelukes, mandarins, and patshaws*, or any other words formed at pleasure, serve to distinguish those who are in the ministry from others who would be in it if they could? What, for instance, is easier than to vary the form of speech, and instead of the word *church*, make it a question in politics, whether the Monument be in danger? Because religion was nearest at hand to furnish a few convenient phrases, is our invention so barren we can find no other? Suppose, for argument sake, that the Tories favored Margarita, the Whigs Mrs. Tofts, and the trimmers Valentini;<sup>1</sup> would not *Margaritians, Toftians, and Valentinians* be very tolerable marks of distinction? The Prasini and Veniti, two most virulent factions in Italy, began (if I remember right) by a distinction of colors in ribbons; and we might contend with as good a grace about the dignity of the blue and the green, which would serve as properly to divide the court, the parliament, and the kingdom, between them, as any terms of art whatsoever, borrowed from religion. And therefore I think there is little force in this objection against Christianity, or prospect of so great an advantage as is proposed in the abolishing of it.

It is again objected, as a very absurd, ridiculous custom, that a set of men should be suffered, much less employed and hired, to bawl one day in seven against the lawfulness of those methods most in use, toward the pursuit of greatness, riches, and

<sup>1</sup> Opera singers of the period.



pleasure, which are the constant practice of all men alive on the other six. But this objection is, I think, a little unworthy of so refined an age as ours. Let us argue this matter calmly: I appeal to the breast of any polite free-thinker, whether, in the pursuit of gratifying a predominant passion, he has not always a wonderful incitement, by reflecting it was a thing forbidden; and therefore we see, in order to cultivate this taste, the wisdom of the nation has taken special care that the ladies should be furnished with prohibited silks, and the men with prohibited wine. And indeed it were to be wished that some other prohibitions were promoted, in order to improve the pleasures of the town; which, for want of such expedients, begin already, as I am told, to flag and grow languid, giving way daily to cruel inroads from the spleen.

It is likewise proposed as a great advantage to the public, that, if we once discard the system of the gospel, all religion will of course be banished for ever; and consequently, along with it, those grievous prejudices of education, which, under the names of *virtue, conscience, honor, justice*, and the like, are so apt to disturb the peace of human minds, and the notions whereof are so hard to be eradicated, by right reason, or free-thinking, sometimes during the whole course of our lives.

Here first I observe, how difficult it is to get rid of a phrase which the world is once grown fond of, though the occasion that first produced it be entirely taken away. For several years past, if a man had but an ill-favored nose, the deep thinkers of the age would, some way or other, contrive to impute the cause to the prejudice of his education. From this fountain were said to be derived all our foolish notions of justice, piety, love of our country; all our opinions of God, or a future state, heaven, hell, and the like; and there might formerly perhaps have been some pretence for this charge. But so effectual care has been taken to remove those prejudices, by an entire change in the methods of education, that (with honor I mention it to our polite innovators) the young gentlemen who are now on the scene seem to have not the least tincture left of those infusions, or string of those weeds; and, by consequence, the reason for abolishing nominal Christianity upon that pretext is wholly ceased.

For the rest, it may perhaps admit a controversy, whether the banishing of all notions of religion whatsoever, would be

convenient for the vulgar. Not that I am in the least of opinion with those who hold religion to have been the invention of politicians, to keep the lower part of the world in awe, by the fear of invisible powers; unless mankind were then very different to what it is now; for I look upon the mass or body of our people here in England, to be as free thinkers, that is to say, as staunch unbelievers, as any of the highest rank. But I conceive some scattered notions about a superior power to be of singular use for the common people, as furnishing excellent materials to keep children quiet when they grow peevish, and providing topics of amusement in a tedious winter night.

Lastly, it is proposed, as a singular advantage, that the abolishing of Christianity will very much contribute to the uniting of Protestants, by enlarging the terms of communion, so as to take in all sorts of dissenters, who are now shut out of the pale, upon account of a few ceremonies which all sides confess to be things indifferent; that this alone will effectually answer the great ends of a scheme for comprehension, by opening a large noble gate, at which all bodies may enter; whereas the chaffering with dissenters, and dodging about this or the other ceremony, is but like opening a few wickets, and leaving them at jar, by which no more than one can get in at a time, and that not without stooping, and sidling, and squeezing his body.

To all this I answer that there is one darling inclination of mankind, which usually affects to be a retainer to religion, though she be neither its parent, its godmother, or its friend; I mean the spirit of opposition, that lived long before Christianity, and can easily subsist without it. Let us, for instance, examine wherein the opposition of sectaries among us consists; we shall find Christianity to have no share in it at all. Does the gospel anywhere prescribe a starched, squeezed countenance, a stiff, formal gait, a singularity of manners and habit, or any affected modes of speech, different from the reasonable part of mankind? Yet, if Christianity did not lend its name to stand in the gap, and to employ or divert these humors, they must of necessity be spent in contraventions to the laws of the land, and disturbance of the public peace. There is a portion of enthusiasm assigned to every nation, which, if it has not proper objects to work on, will burst out, and set all in a flame. If the quiet of a state can be bought, by only flinging men a few cere-

monies to devour, it is a purchase no wise man would refuse. Let the mastiffs amuse themselves about a sheep's skin stuffed with hay, provided it will keep them from worrying the flock. The constitution of convents abroad seems, in one point, a strain of great wisdom; there being few irregularities in human passions that may not have recourse to vent themselves in some of those orders, which are so many retreats for the speculative, the melancholy, the proud, the silent, the politic, and the morose, to spend themselves, and evaporate the noxious particles; for each of whom we, in this island, are forced to provide a several sect of religion, to keep them quiet; and whenever Christianity shall be abolished, the legislature must find some other expedient to employ and entertain them. For what imports it how large a gate you open, if there will be always left a number who place a pride and a merit in refusing to enter?

Having thus considered the most important objections against Christianity, and the chief advantages proposed by the abolishing thereof, I shall now, with equal deference and submission to wiser judgments, as before, proceed to mention a few inconveniences that may happen, if the gospel should be repealed, which perhaps the projectors may not have sufficiently considered.

And first, I am very sensible how much the gentlemen of wit and pleasure are apt to murmur and be shocked at the sight of so many daggled-tail parsons, who happen to fall in their way, and offend their eyes; but at the same time these wise reformers do not consider what an advantage and felicity it is for great wits to be always provided with objects of scorn and contempt, in order to exercise and improve their talents, and divert their spleen from falling on each other, or on themselves; especially when all this may be done without the least imaginable danger to their persons.

And to urge another argument of a parallel nature: if Christianity were once abolished, how could the free-thinkers, the strong reasoners, and the men of profound learning, be able to find another subject, so calculated in all points, whereon to display their abilities? What wonderful productions of wit should we be deprived of, from those whose genius, by continual practice, has been wholly turned upon raillery and invectives against religion, and would therefore never be able to shine or distin-



guish themselves upon any other subject ! We are daily complaining of the great decline of wit among us, and would we take away the greatest, perhaps the only topic, we have left ? Who would ever have suspected Asgill for a wit, or Toland for a philosopher, if the inexhaustible stock of Christianity had not been at hand, to provide them with materials ? What other subject, through all art or nature, could have produced Tindal for a profound author, or furnished him with readers ? It is the wise choice of the subject, that alone adorns and distinguishes the writer. For had a hundred such pens as these been employed on the side of religion, they would have immediately sunk into silence and oblivion. . . .

And therefore, if notwithstanding all I have said it still be thought necessary to have a bill brought in for repealing Christianity, I would humbly offer an amendment, that, instead of the word Christianity, may be put religion in general; which, I conceive, will much better answer all the good ends proposed by the projectors of it. For, as long as we leave in being a God and His providence, with all the necessary consequences which curious and inquisitive men will be apt to draw from such premises, we do not strike at the root of the evil, though we should ever so effectually annihilate the present scheme of the gospel. For of what use is freedom of thought, if it will not produce freedom of action ? — which is the sole end, how remote soever in appearance, of all objections against Christianity; and therefore the free-thinkers consider it as a sort of edifice, wherein all the parts have such a mutual dependence on each other, that if you happen to pull out one single nail, the whole fabric must fall to the ground. This was happily expressed by him who had heard of a text brought for proof of the Trinity, which in an ancient manuscript was differently read; he thereupon immediately took the hint, and, by a sudden deduction of a long sorites, most logically concluded: “Why, if it be as you say, I may safely whore and drink on, and defy the parson.” From which, and many the like instances easy to be produced, I think nothing can be more manifest, than that the quarrel is not against any particular points of hard digestion in the Christian system, but against religion in general; which, by laying restraints on human nature, is supposed the great enemy to the freedom of thought and action.

Upon the whole, if it shall be thought for the benefit of church and state that Christianity be abolished, I conceive, however, it may be more convenient to defer the execution to a time of peace; and not venture, in this conjuncture, to disoblige our allies, who, as it falls out, are all Christians, and many of them, by the prejudices of their education, so bigoted as to place a sort of pride in the appellation. If, upon being rejected by them, we are to trust an alliance with the Turk, we shall find ourselves much deceived: for, as he is too remote, and generally engaged in war with the Persian Emperor, so his people would be more scandalized at our infidelity than our Christian neighbors. For the Turks are not only strict observers of religious worship, but, what is worse, believe a God, — which is more than is required of us, even while we preserve the name of Christians.

To conclude: whatever some may think of the great advantages to trade by this favorite scheme, I do very much apprehend that in six months' time after the act is passed for the extirpation of the gospel, the Bank and East India stock may fall at least one per cent. And since that is fifty times more than ever the wisdom of our age thought fit to venture for the preservation of Christianity, there is no reason we should be at so great a loss, merely for the sake of destroying it.

## A PROPOSAL FOR CORRECTING, IMPROVING, AND ASCERTAINING THE ENGLISH TONGUE

IN A LETTER TO THE MOST HONORABLE ROBERT, EARL  
OF OXFORD AND MORTIMER, LORD HIGH TREASURER  
OF GREAT BRITAIN

1712

[This was the first of Swift's publications which appeared over his acknowledged name. His correspondence shows that he took his proposal very seriously; but nothing came of it. It was sagaciously criticised by Dr. Johnson in his *Life of Swift*.]

. . . The period wherein the English tongue received most improvement, I take to commence with the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, and to conclude with the great rebellion in

forty-two. It is true there was a very ill taste, both of style and wit, which prevailed under King James the First, but that seems to have been corrected in the first years of his successor, who, among many other qualifications of an excellent prince, was a great patron of learning. From the Civil War to this present time, I am apt to doubt whether the corruptions in our language have not at least equaled the refinements of it, and these corruptions very few of the best authors in our age have wholly escaped.

During the usurpation, such an infusion of enthusiastic jargon prevailed in every writing, as was not shaken off in many years after. To this succeeded that licentiousness which entered with the Restoration, and, from infecting our religion and morals, fell to corrupt our language; which last was not likely to be much improved by those who at that time made up the court of King Charles the Second, — either such who had followed him in his banishment, or who had been altogether conversant in the dialect of those fanatic times, or young men, who had been educated in the same country; so that the court, which used to be the standard of propriety and correctness of speech, was then, and, I think, has ever since continued, the worst school in England for that accomplishment, and so will remain till better care be taken in the education of our young nobility, that they may set out into the world with some foundation of literature, in order to qualify them for patterns of politeness. The consequence of this defect upon our language may appear from the plays, and other compositions written for entertainment, within fifty years past, filled with a succession of affected phrases, and new conceited words, either borrowed from the current style of the court, or from those who, under the character of men of wit and pleasure, pretended to give the law. Many of these refinements have already been long antiquated, and are now hardly intelligible, — which is no wonder, when they were the product only of ignorance and caprice.

I have never known this great town without one or more dunces of figure, who had credit enough to give rise to some new word, and propagate it in most conversations, though it had neither humor nor significancy. If it struck the present taste, it was soon transferred into the plays and current scribbles of the week, and became an addition to our language; while



the men of wit and learning, instead of early obviating such corruptions, were too often seduced to imitate and comply with them.

There is another set of men who have contributed very much to the spoiling of the English tongue; I mean the poets, from the time of the Restoration. These gentlemen, although they could not be insensible how much our language was already overstocked with monosyllables, yet, to save time and pains, introduced that barbarous custom of abbreviating words to fit them to the measure of their verses; and this they have frequently done so very injudiciously as to form such harsh, unharmonious sounds, that none but a northern ear could endure. They have joined the most obdurate consonants with one intervening vowel, only to shorten a syllable; and their taste in time became so depraved that what was at first a poetical license, not to be justified, they made their choice, alleging that words pronounced at length sounded faint and languid. This was a pretence to take up the same custom in prose, so that most of the books we see nowadays are full of those manglings and abbreviations. Instances of this abuse are innumerable; what does your lordship think of the words *drudg'd*, *disturb'd*, *rebuk'd*, *fledg'd*, and a thousand others everywhere to be met with in prose as well as verse? — where, by leaving out a vowel to save a syllable, we form so jarring a sound, and so difficult to utter, that I have often wondered how it could ever obtain.

Another cause (and perhaps borrowed from the former) which has contributed not a little to the maiming of our language, is a foolish opinion, advanced of late years, that we ought to spell exactly as we speak; which, beside the obvious inconvenience of utterly destroying our etymology, would be a thing we should never see an end of. Not only the several towns and counties of England have a different way of pronouncing, but even here in London they clip their words after one manner about the court, another in the City, and a third in the suburbs; and in a few years, it is probable, will all differ from themselves, as fancy or fashion shall direct, — all which, reduced to writing, would entirely confound orthography. Yet many people are so fond of this conceit that it is sometimes a difficult matter to read modern books and pamphlets, where

the words are so curtailed, and varied from their original spelling, that whoever has been used to plain English will hardly know them by sight.

Several young men at the universities, terribly possessed with the fear of pedantry, run into a worse extreme, and think all politeness to consist in reading the daily trash sent down to them from hence; this they call knowing the world, and reading men and manners. Thus furnished, they come up to town, reckon all their errors for accomplishments, borrow the newest set of phrases; and, if they take a pen into their hands, all the odd words they have picked up in a coffee-house, or a gaming ordinary, are produced as flowers of style, — and the orthography refined to the utmost. . . . To this we owe that strange race of wits who tell us they write to the humor of the age. And I wish I could say these quaint fopperies were wholly absent from graver subjects. In short, I would undertake to show your lordship several pieces where the beauties of this kind are so predominant that, with all your skill in languages, you could never be able to read or understand them. . . .

In order to reform our language, I conceive, my lord, that a free judicious choice should be made of such persons as are generally allowed to be best qualified for such a work, without any regard to quality, party, or profession. These, to a certain number at least, should assemble at some appointed time and place, and fix on rules by which they design to proceed. What methods they will take is not for me to prescribe. Your lordship, and other persons in great employments, might please to be of the number; and I am afraid such a society would want your instruction and example, as much as your protection, for I have, not without a little envy, observed of late the style of some great ministers very much to exceed that of any other productions.

The persons who are to undertake this work will have the example of the French before them, to imitate where these have proceeded right, and to avoid their mistakes. Beside the grammar part, wherein we are allowed to be very defective, they will observe many gross improprieties which, however authorized by practice, and grown familiar, ought to be discarded. They will find many words that deserve to be utterly thrown out of our language, many more to be corrected, and perhaps not a

few long since antiquated, which ought to be restored on account of their energy and sound.

But what I have most at heart is, that some method should be thought on for ascertaining and fixing our language for ever, after such alterations are made in it as shall be thought requisite. For I am of opinion it is better a language should not be wholly perfect, than that it should be perpetually changing; and we must give over at one time, or at length infallibly change for the worse; as the Romans did, when they began to quit their simplicity of style for affected refinements, such as we meet in Tacitus and other authors, which ended by degrees in many barbarities, even before the Goths had invaded Italy.

The fame of our writers is usually confined to these two islands, and it is hard it should be limited in time, as much as place, by the perpetual variations of our speech. It is your lordship's observation, that if it were not for the Bible and Common Prayer Book in the vulgar tongue, we should hardly be able to understand anything that was written among us a hundred years ago; which is certainly true, for those books, being perpetually read in churches, have proved a kind of standard for language, especially to the common people. And I doubt whether the alterations since introduced have added much to the beauty or strength of the English tongue, though they have taken off a great deal from that simplicity which is one of the greatest perfections in any language. You, my lord, who are so conversant in the sacred writings, and so great a judge of them in their originals, will agree that no translation our country ever yet produced has come up to that of the Old and New Testament; and by the many beautiful passages which I have often had the honor to hear your lordship cite from thence, I am persuaded that the translators of the Bible were masters of an English style much fitter for that work than any we see in our present writings, — which I take to be owing to the simplicity that runs through the whole. Then, as to the greatest part of our liturgy, compiled long before the translation of the Bible now in use, and little altered since, there seem to be in it as great strains of true sublime eloquence as are anywhere to be found in our language, which every man of good taste will observe in the communion service, that of burial, and other parts.

But when I say that I would have our language, after it is



duly correct, always to last, I do not mean that it should never be enlarged. Provided that no word which a society shall give a sanction to, be afterward antiquated and exploded, they may have liberty to receive whatever new ones they shall find occasion for; because then the old books will yet be always valuable according to their intrinsic worth, and not thrown aside on account of unintelligible words and phrases, which appear harsh and uncouth only because they are out of fashion. Had the Roman tongue continued vulgar in that city till this time, it would have been absolutely necessary, from the mighty changes that have been made in law and religion, from the many terms of art required in trade and in war, from the new inventions that have happened in the world, from the vast spreading of navigation and commerce, with many other obvious circumstances, to have made great additions to that language; yet the ancients would still have been read and understood with pleasure and ease. The Greek tongue received many enlargements between the time of Homer and that of Plutarch, yet the former author was probably as well understood in Trajan's time as the latter. What Horace says of words going off and perishing like leaves, and new ones coming in their place, is a misfortune he laments, rather than a thing that he approves. But I cannot see why this should be absolutely necessary; or if it were, what would have become of his *monumentum ære perennius*?<sup>1</sup>

Writing by memory only, as I do at present, I would gladly keep within my depth, and therefore shall not enter into farther particulars. Neither do I pretend more than to show the usefulness of this design, and to make some general observations, leaving the rest to that society, which I hope will owe its institution and patronage to your lordship. Besides, I would willingly avoid repetition, having, about a year ago, communicated to the public much of what I had to offer upon this subject, by the hands of an ingenious gentleman who for a long time did thrice a week divert or instruct the kingdom by his papers, and is supposed to pursue the same design at present, under the title of Spectator. This author, who has tried the force and compass of our language with so much success, agrees entirely with me in most of my sentiments relating to it. So do the greatest part of the men of wit and learning whom I have

<sup>1</sup> "Monument more enduring than bronze."

had the happiness to converse with; and therefore I imagine that such a society would be pretty unanimous in the main points. . . .

As barbarous and ignorant as we were in former centuries, there was more effectual care taken by our ancestors to preserve the memory of times and persons, than we find in this age of learning and politeness, as we are pleased to call it. The rude Latin of the monks is still very intelligible; whereas, had their records been delivered down only in the vulgar tongue, so barren and so barbarous, so subject to continual succeeding changes, they could not now be understood, unless by antiquaries who make it their study to expound them. And we must, at this day, have been content with such poor abstracts of our English story as laborious men of low genius would think fit to give us; and even these, in the next age, would be likewise swallowed up in succeeding collections. If things go on at this rate, all I can promise your lordship is, that, about two hundred years hence, some painful compiler, who will be at the trouble of studying old language, may inform the world that, in the reign of Queen Anne, Robert, Earl of Oxford, a very wise and excellent man, was made High Treasurer, and saved his country, which in those days was almost ruined by a foreign war and a domestic faction. Thus much he may be able to pick out, and willing to transfer into his new history; but the rest of your character, which I or any other writer may now value ourselves by drawing, and the particular account of the great things done under your ministry, for which you are already so celebrated in most parts of Europe, will probably be dropped, on account of the antiquated style and manner they are delivered in.

How then shall any man, who has a genius for history equal to the best of the ancients, be able to undertake such a work with spirit and cheerfulness, when he considers that he will be read with pleasure but a very few years, and, in an age or two, shall hardly be understood without an interpreter? This is like employing an excellent statuary to work upon mouldering stone. Those who apply their studies to preserve the memory of others, will always have some concern for their own; and I believe it is for this reason that so few writers among us, of any distinction, have turned their thoughts to such a discouraging employment; for the best English historian must lie under this

mortification, — that when his style grows antiquated, he will be only considered as a tedious relater of facts, and perhaps consulted, in his turn, among other neglected authors, to furnish materials for some future collector. . . .

## TRAVELS INTO SEVERAL REMOTE NATIONS OF THE WORLD

IN FOUR PARTS. BY LEMUEL GULLIVER

1726

[This book had been begun about 1720, and was known to Swift's friends some time before its publication. It appears to have been the only one of his works for which he received pay, — £200, obtained through Pope's intervention. The *Travels* are divided into four parts: A Voyage to Lilliput; A Voyage to Brobdingnag; A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Glubbubdrib, Luggnagg, and Japan; A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms. In the first part Swift satirizes humanity by representing it as appearing contemptible in the eyes of creatures very much smaller than we; in the second part by representing it as equally contemptible when viewed through the other end of the telescope, — by creatures very much larger; in the third part he satirizes especially the intellectual efforts of the race, and its longings for immortality; in the fourth part he represents humanity as infinitely contemptible from the standpoint of a commonwealth of horses (human beings appearing in the loathsome form of "Yahoos"). The first two parts are universally known as brilliant examples of circumstantial fiction; the third and fourth parts are less attractive, but more characteristic, from the increased virulence of their satire. The following extracts are from the Voyage to Laputa and Balnibarbi (chapters II, IV, V) and the Voyage to the Houyhnhnms (chapters V and VI).]

### [LAPUTA]

AT my alighting, I was surrounded with a crowd of people; but those who stood nearest seemed to be of better quality. They beheld me with all the marks and circumstances of wonder; neither, indeed, was I much in their debt, having never till then seen a race of mortals so singular in their shapes, habits, and countenances. Their heads were all reclined either to the right or the left; one of their eyes turned inward, and the other directly up to the zenith. Their outward garments were adorned with the figures of suns, moons, and stars, interwoven with those of fiddles, flutes, harps, trumpets, guitars, harpsichords, and many other instruments of music, unknown to us in Eu-



rope. I observed, here and there, many in the habit of servants, with a blown bladder fastened like a flail to the end of a short stick, which they carried in their hands. In each bladder was a small quantity of dried peas, or little pebbles (as I was afterwards informed). With these bladders they now and then flapped the mouths and ears of those who stood near them, of which practice I could not then conceive the meaning. It seems the minds of these people are so taken up with intense speculations, that they neither can speak, nor attend to the discourses of others, without being roused by some external taction upon the organs of speech and hearing; for which reason those persons who are able to afford it always keep a flapper (the original is *climenole*) in their family, as one of their domestics, nor ever walk abroad, or make visits, without him. And the business of this officer is, when two, three, or more persons are in company, gently to strike with his bladder the mouth of him who is to speak, and the right ear of him or them to whom the speaker addresses himself. This flapper is likewise employed diligently to attend his master in his walks, and, upon occasion, to give him a soft flap on his eyes, because he is always so wrapped up in cogitation that he is in manifest danger of falling down every precipice, and bouncing his head against every post; and in the streets, of jostling others, or being jostled himself, into the kennel.

It was necessary to give the reader this information, without which he would be at the same loss with me to understand the proceedings of these people, as they conducted me up the stairs to the top of the island, and from thence to the royal palace. While we were ascending, they forgot several times what they were about, and left me to myself, till their memories were again roused by their flappers; for they appeared altogether unmoved by the sight of my foreign habit and countenance, and by the shouts of the vulgar, whose thoughts and minds were more disengaged.

At last we entered the palace, and proceeded into the chamber of presence, where I saw the king seated on his throne, attended on each side by persons of prime quality. Before the throne was a large table filled with globes and spheres, and mathematical instruments of all kinds. His Majesty took not the least notice of us, although our entrance was not without

sufficient noise, by the concourse of all persons belonging to the court. But he was then deep in a problem, and we attended at least an hour before he could solve it. There stood by him on each side a young page, with flaps in their hands, and, when they saw he was at leisure, one of them gently struck his mouth, and the other his right ear; at which he started like one awaked on the sudden, and looking towards me, and the company I was in, recollected the occasion of our coming, whereof he had been informed before. He spoke some words, whereupon immediately a young man with a flap came up to my side, and flapped me gently on the right ear, but I made signs, as well as I could, that I had no occasion for such an instrument; which, as I afterwards found, gave his Majesty, and the whole court, a very mean opinion of my understanding. The king, as far as I could conjecture, asked me several questions, and I addressed myself to him in all the languages I had. When it was found that I could neither understand nor be understood, I was conducted, by his order, to an apartment in his palace (this prince being distinguished, above all his predecessors, for his hospitality to strangers), where two servants were appointed to attend me. My dinner was brought, and four persons of quality, whom I remembered to have seen very near the king's person, did me the honor to dine with me. We had two courses, of three dishes each. In the first course there was a shoulder of mutton, cut into an equilateral triangle, a piece of beef into a rhomboid, and a pudding into a cycloid. The second course was two ducks, trussed up into the form of fiddles, sausages and puddings resembling flutes and hautboys, and a breast of veal in the shape of a harp. The servants cut our bread into cones, cylinders, parallelograms, and several other mathematical figures.

While we were at dinner, I made bold to ask the names of several things in their language, and those noble persons, by the assistance of their flappers, delighted to give me answers, hoping to raise my admiration of their great abilities, if I could be brought to converse with them. I was soon able to call for bread and drink, or whatever else I wanted.

After dinner my company withdrew, and a person was sent to me, by the king's order, attended by a flapper. He brought with him pen, ink, and paper, and three or four books, giving me to understand by signs that he was sent to teach me the

language. We sat together four hours, in which time I wrote down a great number of words in columns, with the translations over against them; I likewise made a shift to learn several short sentences. For my tutor would order one of my servants to fetch something, to turn about, to make a bow, to sit, or to stand, or walk, and the like. Then I took down the sentence in writing. He showed me also, in one of his books, the figures of the sun, moon, and stars, the Zodiac, the tropics, and polar circles, together with the denominations of many figures of planes and solids. He gave me the names and descriptions of all the musical instruments, and the general terms of art in playing on each of them. After he had left me, I placed all my words, with their interpretations, in alphabetical order. And thus, in a few days, by the help of a very faithful memory, I got some insight into their language.

The word which I interpret the flying or floating island, is, in the original, *laputa*, whereof I could never learn the true etymology. *Lap*, in the old obsolete language, signifieth high, and *untuh*, a governor, from which they say, by corruption, was derived *laputa*, from *lapuntuh*. But I do not approve of this derivation, which seems to be a little strained. I ventured to offer to the learned among them a conjecture of my own, that *laputa* was *quasi lap outed*; *lap* signifying properly the dancing of the sun-beams in the sea, and *outed* a wing; which, however, I shall not obtrude, but submit to the judicious reader.

Those to whom the king had entrusted me, observing how ill I was clad, ordered a tailor to come next morning and take my measure for a suit of clothes. This operator did his office after a different manner from those of his trade in Europe. He first took my altitude by a quadrant, and then, with rule and compasses, described the dimensions and outlines of my whole body, all which he entered upon paper, and in six days brought my clothes — very ill made, and quite out of shape, by happening to mistake a figure in the calculation. But my comfort was that I observed such accidents very frequent, and little regarded.

During my confinement for want of clothes, and by an indisposition that held me some days longer, I much enlarged my dictionary; and, when I went next to court, was able to understand many things the king spoke, and to return him some kind



of answers. His Majesty had given orders that the islands should move north-east and by east, to the vertical point over Lagado, the metropolis of the whole kingdom below upon the firm earth. It was about ninety leagues distant, and our voyage lasted four days and a half. I was not in the least sensible of the progressive motion made in the air by the island. On the second morning, about eleven o'clock, the king himself, in person, attended by his nobility, courtiers, and officers, having prepared all their musical instruments, played on them for three hours, without intermission, so that I was quite stunned with the noise; neither could I possibly guess the meaning, till my tutor informed me. He said that the people of their island had their ears adapted to hear the music of the spheres, which always played at certain periods, and the court was now prepared to bear their part, in whatever instrument they most excelled.

In our journey towards Lagado, the capital city, his Majesty ordered that the island should stop over certain towns and villages, from whence he might receive the petitions of his subjects. And, to this purpose, several packthreads were let down, with small weights at the bottom. On these packthreads the people strung their petitions, which mounted up directly, like the scraps of paper fastened by schoolboys at the end of the string that holds their kite. Sometimes we received wine and victuals from below, which were drawn up by pulleys.

The knowledge I had in mathematics gave me great assistance in acquiring their phraseology, which depended much upon that science and music; and in the latter I was not unskilled. Their ideas are perpetually conversant in lines and figures. If they would, for example, praise the beauty of a woman, or any other animal, they describe it by rhombs, circles, parallelograms, ellipses, and other geometrical terms; or by words of art drawn from music, needless here to repeat. I observed, in the king's kitchen, all sorts of mathematical and musical instruments, after the figures of which they cut up the joints that were served to his Majesty's table.

Their houses are very ill built, the walls bevel, without one right angle in any apartment; and this defect ariseth from the contempt they bear to practical geometry, which they despise as vulgar and mechanic, those instructions they give being too

refined for the intellectuals of their workmen, which occasions perpetual mistakes. And although they are dexterous enough upon a piece of paper in the management of the rule, the pencil, and the divider, yet, in the common actions and behavior of life, I have not seen a more clumsy, awkward, and unhandy people, nor so slow and perplexed in their conceptions upon all other subjects, except those of mathematics and music. They are very bad reasoners, and vehemently given to opposition, unless when they happen to be of the right opinion, which is seldom their case. Imagination, fancy, and invention they are wholly strangers to, nor have any words in their language by which those ideas can be expressed; the whole compass of their thoughts and mind being shut up within the two forementioned sciences.

Most of them, and especially those who deal in the astronomical part, have great faith in judicial astrology, although they are ashamed to own it publicly. But what I chiefly admired, and thought altogether unaccountable, was the strong disposition I observed in them towards news and politics, perpetually inquiring into public affairs, giving their judgments in matters of state, and passionately disputing every inch of a party opinion. I have, indeed, observed the same disposition among most of the mathematicians I have known in Europe, although I could never discover the least analogy between the two sciences; unless those people suppose that, because the smallest circle hath as many degrees as the largest, therefore the regulation and management of the world require no more abilities than the handling and turning of a globe. But I rather take this quality to spring from a very common infirmity of human nature, inclining us to be more curious and conceited in matters where we have least concern, and for which we are least adapted either by study or nature.

These people are under continual disquietudes, never enjoying a minute's piece of mind; and their disturbances proceed from causes which very little affect the rest of mortals. Their apprehensions arise from several changes they dread in the celestial bodies. For instance, that the earth, by the continual approaches of the sun towards it, must in course of time be absorbed, or swallowed up. That the face of the sun will by degrees be encrusted with its own effluvia, and give no more light

to the world. That the earth very narrowly escaped a brush from the tail of the last comet, which would have infallibly reduced it to ashes; and that the next, which they have calculated for one-and-thirty years hence, will probably destroy us. For if in its perihelion it should approach within a certain degree of the sun (as by their calculations they have reason to dread), it will conceive a degree of heat ten thousand times more intense than that of red-hot glowing iron, and, in its absence from the sun, carry a blazing tail ten hundred thousand and fourteen miles long; through which if the earth should pass, at the distance of one hundred thousand miles from the nucleus or main body of the comet, it must in its passage be set on fire, and reduced to ashes. That the sun, daily spending its rays without any nutriment to supply them, will at last be wholly consumed and annihilated; which must be attended with the destruction of this earth, and of all the planets that receive their light from it.

They are so perpetually alarmed with the apprehensions of these and the like impending dangers, that they can neither sleep quietly in their beds, nor have any relish for the common pleasures or amusements of life. When they meet an acquaintance in the morning, the first question is about the sun's health, — how he looked at his setting and rising, and what hopes they have to avoid the stroke of the approaching comet. This conversation they are apt to run into with the same temper that boys discover in delighting to hear terrible stories of spirits and hobgoblins, which they greedily listen to, and dare not go to bed for fear. . . .

[BALNIBARBI]

This academy is not an entire single building, but a continuation of several houses on both sides of a street, which, growing waste, was purchased, and applied to that use. I was received very kindly by the warden, and went for many days to the academy. Every room hath in it one or more projectors, — and I believe I could not be in fewer than five hundred rooms.

The first man I saw was of a meagre aspect, with sooty hands and face, his hair and beard long, ragged, and singed in several places. His clothes, shirt, and skin were all of the same color. He had been eight years upon a project for extracting sun-



beams out of cucumbers, which were to be put into vials hermetically sealed, and let out to warm the air in raw inclement summers. He told me he did not doubt, in eight years more, he should be able to supply the governor's gardens with sunshine at a reasonable rate; but he complained that his stock was low, and entreated me to give him something as an encouragement to ingenuity, especially since this had been a very dear season for cucumbers. I made him a small present, for my lord had furnished me with money on purpose, because he knew their practice of begging from all who go to see them. . . .

I saw another at work to calcine ice into gunpowder, who likewise showed me a treatise he had written concerning the malleability of fire, which he intended to publish.

There was a most ingenious architect, who had contrived a new method for building houses, by beginning at the roof and working downwards to the foundation, which he justified to me by the like practice of those two prudent insects, the bee and the spider.

There was a man born blind, who had several apprentices in his own condition; their employment was to mix colors for painters, which their master taught them to distinguish by feeling and smelling. It was, indeed, my misfortune to find them, at that time, not very perfect in their lessons, and the professor himself happened to be generally mistaken. This artist is much encouraged and esteemed by the whole fraternity.

In another apartment I was highly pleased with a projector who had found a device of plowing the ground with hogs, to save the charges of ploughs, cattle, and labor. The method is this: in an acre of ground, you bury, at six inches distance, and eight deep, a quantity of acorns, dates, chestnuts, and other mast, or vegetables, whereof these animals are fondest; then you drive six hundred or more of them into the field, where, in few days, they will root up the whole ground in search of their food, and make it fit for sowing, at the same time manuring it with their dung. It is true, upon experiment, they found the charge and trouble very great, and they had little or no crop. However, it is not doubted that this invention may be capable of great improvement.

I went into another room, where the walls and ceiling were all hung round with cobwebs, except a narrow passage for the

artist to go in and out. At my entrance, he called aloud to me not to disturb his webs. He lamented the fatal mistake the world had been so long in of using silk-worms, while we had such plenty of domestic insects who infinitely excelled the former, because they understood how to weave as well as spin. And he proposed farther, that, by employing spiders, the charge of dyeing silks would be wholly saved; whereof I was fully convinced, when he showed me a vast number of flies most beautifully colored, wherewith he fed his spiders, assuring us that the webs would take a tincture from them; and as he had them of all hues, he hoped to fit everybody's fancy, as soon as he could find proper food for the flies, of certain gums, oils, and other glutinous matter, to give a strength and consistence to the threads.

There was an astronomer, who had undertaken to place a sun-dial upon the great weather-cock on the town house, by adjusting the annual and diurnal motions of the earth and sun, so as to answer and coincide with all accidental turnings of the wind. . . .

I visited many other apartments, but shall not trouble my reader with all the curiosities I observed, being studious of brevity.

I had hitherto seen only one side of the academy, the other being appropriated to the advancers of speculative learning, of whom I shall say something, when I have mentioned one illustrious person more, who is called among them "the universal artist." He told us he had been thirty years employing his thoughts for the improvement of human life. He had two large rooms full of wonderful curiosities, and fifty men at work. Some were condensing air into a dry tangible substance, by extracting the nitre, and letting the aqueous or fluid particles percolate; others softening marble for pillows and pin-cushions; others petrifying the hoofs of a living horse, to preserve them from foundering. The artist himself was at that time busy upon two great designs; the first, to sow land with chaff, wherein he affirmed the true seminal virtue to be contained, as he demonstrated by several experiments which I was not skillful enough to comprehend. The other was, by a certain composition of gums, minerals, and vegetables, outwardly applied, to prevent the growth of wool upon two young lambs; and he

hoped, in a reasonable time, to propagate the breed of naked sheep all over the kingdom.

We crossed a walk to the other part of the academy, where, as I have already said, the projectors in speculative learning resided.

The first professor I saw was in a very large room, with forty pupils about him. After salutation, observing me to look earnestly upon a frame which took up the greatest part of both the length and breadth of the room, he said perhaps I might wonder to see him employed in a project for improving speculative knowledge by practical and mechanical operations; but the world would soon be sensible of its usefulness, and he flattered himself that a more noble, exalted thought never sprang in any other man's head. Every one knew how laborious the usual method is of attaining to arts and sciences; whereas, by his contrivance, the most ignorant person, at a reasonable charge, and with a little bodily labor, may write books in philosophy, poetry, politics, law, mathematics, and theology, without the least assistance from genius or study. He then led me to the frame, about the sides whereof all his pupils stood in ranks. It was twenty feet square, placed in the middle of the room. The superficies was composed of several bits of wood, about the bigness of a die, but some larger than others. They were all linked together by slender wires. These bits of wood were covered on every square with paper pasted on them; and on these papers were written all the words of their language, in their several moods, tenses, and declensions, but without any order. The professor then desired me to observe, for he was going to set his engine at work. The pupils, at his command, took each of them hold of an iron handle, whereof there were forty fixed round the edges of the frame; and, giving them a sudden turn, the whole disposition of the words was entirely changed. He then commanded six-and-thirty of the lads to read the several lines softly, as they appeared upon the frame; and, where they found three or four words together that might make part of a sentence, they dictated to the four remaining boys, who were scribes. This work was repeated three or four times, and at every turn the engine was so contrived that the words shifted into new places, as the square bits of wood moved upside down.

Six hours a day the young students were employed in this



labor, and the professor showed me several volumes in large folio, already collected, of broken sentences which he intended to piece together, and, out of those rich materials, to give the world a complete body of all arts and sciences; which, however, might be still improved, and much expedited, if the public would raise a fund for making and employing five hundred such frames in Lagado, and oblige the managers to contribute in common their several collections.

He assured me that this invention had employed all his thoughts from his youth; that he had emptied the whole vocabulary into his frame, and made the strictest computation of the general proportion there is in books between the numbers of particles, nouns, and verbs, and other parts of speech.

I made my humblest acknowledgment to this illustrious person for his great communicativeness; and promised, if ever I had the good fortune to return to my native country, that I would do him justice, as the sole inventor of this wonderful machine; the form and contrivance of which I desired leave to delineate upon paper, as in the figure here annexed. I told him, although it were the custom of our learned in Europe to steal inventions from each other, — who had thereby at least this advantage, that it became a controversy which was the right owner, — yet I would take such caution, that he should have the honor entire, without a rival.

We next went to the school of languages, where three professors sat in consultation upon improving that of their own country.

The first project was to shorten discourse by cutting polysyllables into one, and leaving out verbs and participles; because, in reality, all things imaginable are but nouns.

The other project was a scheme for entirely abolishing all words whatsoever; and this was urged as a great advantage in point of health, as well as brevity. For it is plain that every word we speak is, in some degree, a diminution of our lungs by corrosion, and consequently contributes to the shortening of our lives. An expedient was therefore offered, that, since words are only names for things, it would be more convenient for all men to carry about them such things as were necessary to express the particular business they are to discourse on. And this invention would certainly have taken place, to the great ease as

well as health of the subject, if the women, in conjunction with the vulgar and illiterate, had not threatened to raise a rebellion, unless they might be allowed the liberty to speak with their tongues after the manner of their forefathers; such constant irreconcilable enemies to science are the common people. However, many of the most learned and wise adhere to the new scheme of expressing themselves by things; which hath only this inconvenience attending it, that, if a man's business be very great, and of various kinds, he must be obliged, in proportion, to carry a greater bundle of things upon his back, unless he can afford one or two strong servants to attend him. I have often beheld two of those sages almost sinking under the weight of their packs, like peddlers among us, who, when they met in the streets, would lay down their loads, open their sacks, and hold conversation for an hour together, — then put up their implements, help each other resume their burdens, and take their leave.

But for short conversations a man may carry implements in his pockets, and under his arms, enough to supply him; and in his house he cannot be at a loss. Therefore the room where company meet, who practice this art, is full of all things ready at hand, requisite to furnish matter for this kind of artificial converse.

Another great advantage proposed by this invention was, that it would serve as an universal language, to be understood in all civilized nations, whose goods and utensils are generally of the same kind, or nearly resembling, so that their uses might easily be comprehended. And thus ambassadors would be qualified to treat with foreign princes, or ministers of state, to whose tongues they were utter strangers.

I was at the mathematical school, where the master taught his pupils after a method scarce imaginable to us in Europe. The proposition and demonstration were fairly written on a thin wafer, with ink composed of a cephalic tincture. This the student was to swallow upon a fasting stomach, and for three days following eat nothing but bread and water. As the wafer digested, the tincture mounted to his brain, bearing the proposition along with it. But the success had not hitherto been answerable, partly by some error in the quantum or composition, and partly by the perverseness of lads, to whom this bolus is

so nauseous, that they generally steal aside, and discharge it upwards, before it can operate; neither have they been yet persuaded to use so long an abstinence as the prescription requires. . . .

[THE HOUYHNHNMS]

The reader may please to observe that the following extract of many conversations I had with my master, contains a summary of the most material points which were discoursed at several times, for above two years, his Honor often desiring fuller satisfaction, as I farther improved in the Houyhnhnm tongue. I laid before him, as well as I could, the whole state of Europe; I discoursed of trade and manufactures, of arts and sciences; and the answers I gave to all the questions he made, as they arose upon several subjects, were a fund of conversation not to be exhausted. But I shall here only set down the substance of what passed between us concerning my own country, reducing it into order as well as I can, without any regard to time, or other circumstances, while I strictly adhere to truth. My only concern is, that I shall hardly be able to do justice to my master's arguments and expressions, which must needs suffer by my want of capacity, as well as by a translation into our barbarous English.

In obedience, therefore, to his Honor's commands, I related to him the revolution under the Prince of Orange; the long war with France entered into by the said Prince, and renewed by his successor the present Queen, wherein the greatest powers of Christendom were engaged, and which still continued; I computed, at his request, that about a million of Yahoos might have been killed in the whole progress of it, and perhaps a hundred or more cities taken, and five times as many ships burnt or sunk.

He asked me what were the usual causes or motives that made one country go to war with another. I answered they were innumerable; but I should only mention a few of the chief. Sometimes the ambition of princes, who never think they have land or people enough to govern; sometimes the corruption of ministers, who engage their master in a war in order to stifle or divert the clamor of the subjects against their evil administration. Difference in opinion hath cost many millions of lives: for instance, whether flesh be bread, or bread be flesh; whether



the juice of a certain berry be blood or wine; whether whistling be a vice or virtue; whether it be better to kiss a post, or throw it into the fire; what is the best color for a coat, — whether black, white, red, or gray; and whether it should be long or short, narrow or wide, dirty or clean; with many more. Neither are any wars so furious and bloody, or of so long continuance, as those occasioned by difference in opinion, especially if it be in things indifferent.

Sometimes the quarrel between two princes is to decide which of them shall dispossess a third of his dominions, where neither of them pretend to any right. Sometimes one prince quarrelleth with another, for fear the other should quarrel with him. Sometimes a war is entered upon, because the enemy is too strong; and sometimes because he is too weak. Sometimes our neighbors want the things which we have, or have the things which we want; and we both fight, till they take ours, or give us theirs. It is a very justifiable cause of a war, to invade a country, after the people have been wasted by famine, destroyed by pestilence, or embroiled by factions among themselves. It is justifiable to enter into war against our nearest ally, when one of his towns lies convenient for us, or a territory of land, that would render our dominions round and complete. If a prince sends forces into a nation where the people are poor and ignorant, he may lawfully put half of them to death, and make slaves of the rest, in order to civilize and reduce them from their barbarous way of living. It is a very kingly, honorable, and frequent practice, when one prince desires the assistance of another to secure him against an invasion, that the assistant, when he hath driven out the invader, should seize on the dominions himself, and kill, imprison, or banish the prince he came to relieve. Alliance by blood or marriage is a frequent cause of war between princes; and the nearer the kindred is, the greater is their disposition to quarrel. Poor nations are hungry, and rich nations are proud; and pride and hunger will ever be at variance. For these reasons, the trade of a soldier is held the most honorable of all others; because a soldier is a Yahoo hired to kill in cold blood as many of his own species, who had never offended him, as possibly he can.

There is likewise a kind of beggarly princes in Europe, not able to make war by themselves, who hire out their troops to

richer nations, for so much a day to each man; of which they keep three-fourths to themselves, and it is the best part of their maintenance; such are those in Germany and other northern parts of Europe.

“What you have told me,” said my master, “upon the subject of war, does, indeed, discover most admirably the effects of that reason you pretend to; however, it is happy that the shame is greater than the danger, and that Nature hath left you utterly incapable of doing much mischief. For, your mouths lying flat with your faces, you can hardly bite each other to any purpose, unless by consent. Then, as to the claws upon your feet before and behind, they are so short and tender, that one of our Yahoos would drive a dozen of yours before him. And therefore, in recounting the numbers of those who have been killed in battle, I cannot but think that you have said the thing which is not.”

I could not forbear shaking my head, and smiling a little at his ignorance. And, being no stranger to the art of war, I gave him a description of cannons, culverins, muskets, carbines, pistols, bullets, powder, swords, bayonets, battles, sieges, retreats, attacks, undermines, countermines, bombardments, sea-fights; ships sunk with a thousand men; twenty thousand killed on each side; dying groans, limbs flying in the air; smoke, noise, confusion, trampling to death under horses' feet; flight, pursuit, victory; fields strewed with carcases, left for food to dogs and wolves and birds of prey; plundering, stripping, ravishing, burning, and destroying. And, to set forth the valor of my own dear countrymen, I assured him that I had seen them blow up a hundred enemies at once in a siege, and as many in a ship; and beheld the dead bodies come down in pieces from the clouds, to the great diversion of the spectators.

I was going on to more particulars when my master commanded me silence. He said, whoever understood the nature of Yahoos might easily believe it possible for so vile an animal to be capable of every action I had named, if their strength and cunning equaled their malice. But as my discourse had increased his abhorrence of the whole species, so he found it gave him a disturbance in his mind, to which he was wholly a stranger before. He thought his ears, being used to such abominable words, might, by degrees, admit them with less detestation.

That, although he hated the Yahoos of this country, yet he no more blamed them for their odious qualities than he did a *gunyah* (a bird of prey) for its cruelty, or a sharp stone for cutting his hoof. But when a creature pretending to reason could be capable of such enormities, he dreaded lest the corruption of that faculty might be worse than brutality itself. He seemed therefore confident that, instead of reason, we were only possessed of some quality fitted to increase our natural vices, as the reflection from a troubled stream returns the image of an ill-shapen body, not only larger, but more distorted.

He added that he had heard too much upon the subject of war, both in this and some former discourses. There was another point which a little perplexed him at present. I had informed him that some of our crew left their country on account of being ruined by law; that I had already explained the meaning of the word, but he was at a loss how it should come to pass that the law, which was intended for every man's preservation, should be any man's ruin. Therefore he desired to be further satisfied what I meant by law, and the dispensers thereof, according to the present practice in my own country; because he thought Nature and reason were sufficient guides for a reasonable animal, as we pretended to be, in showing us what we ought to do and what to avoid.

I assured his Honor that law was a science in which I had not much conversed, further than by employing advocates in vain, upon some injustices that had been done me; however, I would give him all the satisfaction I was able.

I said, there was a society of men among us, bred up from their youth in the art of proving, by words multiplied for the purpose, that white is black, and black is white, according as they are paid. To this society all the rest of the people are slaves. For example, if my neighbor hath a mind to my cow, he hires a lawyer to prove that he ought to have my cow from me. I must then hire another to defend my right, it being against all rules of law that any man should be allowed to speak for himself. Now in this case I, who am the right owner, lie under two disadvantages; first, my lawyer, being practiced almost from his cradle in defending falsehood, is quite out of his element when he would be an advocate for justice, — which, as an office unnatural, he always attempts with great awkwardness,



if not with ill-will. The second disadvantage is, that my lawyer must proceed with great caution, or else he will be reprimanded by the judges, and abhorred by his brethren, as one that would lessen the practice of the law. And therefore I have but two methods to preserve my cow. The first is, to gain over my adversary's lawyer with a double fee; who will then betray his client, by insinuating that he hath justice on his side. The second way is for my lawyer to make my cause appear as unjust as he can, by allowing the cow to belong to my adversary; and this, if it be skillfully done, will certainly bespeak the favor of the bench. Now, your Honor is to know that these judges are persons appointed to decide all controversies of property, as well as for the trial of criminals, and picked out from the most dexterous lawyers, who are grown old or lazy, and, having been biased all their lives against truth and equity, are under such a fatal necessity of favoring fraud, perjury, and oppression, that I have known several of them refuse a large bribe from the side where justice lay, rather than injure the faculty by doing anything unbecoming their nature or their office.

It is a maxim among these lawyers that whatever hath been done before may legally be done again; and therefore they take special care to record all the decisions formerly made against common justice and the general reason of mankind. These, under the name of precedents, they produce as authorities, to justify the most iniquitous opinions, and the judges never fail of directing accordingly.

In pleading, they studiously avoid entering into the merits of the cause, but are loud, violent, and tedious, in dwelling upon all circumstances which are not to the purpose. For instance, in the case already mentioned, they never desire to know what claim or title my adversary hath to my cow, but whether the said cow were red or black, her horns long or short, — whether the field I graze her in be round or square, — whether she was milked at home or abroad, — what diseases she is subject to, and the like; after which they consult precedents, adjourn the cause from time to time, and in ten, twenty, or thirty years, come to an issue.

It is likewise to be observed that this society hath a peculiar cant and jargon of their own, that no other mortal can un-

derstand, and wherein all their laws are written, which they take special care to multiply; whereby they have wholly confounded the very essence of truth and falsehood, of right and wrong; so that it will take thirty years to decide whether the field left me by my ancestors for six generations, belongs to me, or to a stranger three hundred miles off. . . .

My master was yet wholly at a loss to understand what motives could incite this race of lawyers to perplex, disquiet, and weary themselves, and engage in a confederacy of injustice, merely for the sake of injuring their fellow-animals; neither could he comprehend what I meant in saying they did it for hire. Whereupon I was at much pains to describe to him the use of money, the materials it was made of, and the value of the metals; that, when a Yahoo had got a great store of this precious substance, he was able to purchase whatever he had a mind to, — the finest clothing, the noblest houses, great tracts of land, the most costly meats and drinks, and have his choice of the most beautiful females. Therefore, since money alone was able to perform all these feats, our Yahoos thought they could never have enough of it to spend, or to save, as they found themselves inclined, from their natural bent, either to profusion or avarice. That the rich man enjoyed the fruit of the poor man's labor, and the latter were a thousand to one in proportion to the former. That the bulk of our people were forced to live miserably, by laboring every day for small wages, to make a few live plentifully. I enlarged myself much on these and many other particulars, to the same purpose, but his Honor was still to seek; for he went upon a supposition that all animals had a title to their share in the productions of the earth, and especially those who presided over the rest. Therefore he desired I would let him know what these costly meats were, and how any of us happened to want them. Whereupon I enumerated as many sorts as came into my head, with the various methods of dressing them, which could not be done without sending vessels by sea to every part of the world, as well for liquors to drink, as for sauces, and innumerable other conveniences. I assured him that this whole globe of earth must be at least three times gone round, before one of our better female Yahoos could get her breakfast, or a cup to put it in. He said that must needs be a miserable country which cannot furnish

food for its own inhabitants. But what he chiefly wondered at, was how such vast tracts of ground as I described should be wholly without fresh water, and the people put to the necessity of sending over the sea for drink. I replied that England (the dear place of my nativity) was computed to produce three times the quantity of food more than its inhabitants are able to consume, as well as liquors extracted from grain, or pressed out of the fruit of certain trees, which made excellent drink; and the same proportion in every other convenience of life. But in order to feed the luxury and intemperance of the males, and the vanity of the females, we sent away the greatest part of our necessary things to other countries, from whence, in return, we brought the materials of diseases, folly, and vice, to spend among ourselves. Hence it follows of necessity that vast numbers of our people are compelled to seek their livelihood by begging, robbing, stealing, cheating, pimping, forswearing, flattering, suborning, forging, gaming, lying, fawning, hectoring, voting, scribbling, star-gazing, poisoning, whoring, canting, libeling, free-thinking, and the like occupations; every one of which terms I was at much pains to make him understand.

That wine was not imported among us from foreign countries, to supply the want of water, or other drinks, but because it was a sort of liquid which made us merry, by putting us out of our senses; diverted all melancholy thoughts, begat wild extravagant imaginations in the brain, raised our hopes, and banished our fears; suspended every office of reason for a time, and deprived us of the use of our limbs, till we fell into a profound sleep; although it must be confessed that we always awaked sick and dispirited, and that the use of this liquor filled us with diseases which made our lives uncomfortable and short.

But, beside all this, the bulk of our people supported themselves by furnishing the necessities or conveniences of life to the rich, and to each other. For instance, when I am at home, and dressed as I ought to be, I carry on my body the workmanship of an hundred tradesmen; the building and furniture of my house employ as many more, and five times the number to adorn my wife.

I was going on to tell him of another sort of people, who get their livelihood by attending the sick, having upon some occasions informed his Honor that many of my crew had died of



diseases. But here it was with the utmost difficulty that I brought him to apprehend what I meant. He could easily conceive that a Houyhnhnm grew weak and heavy a few days before his death; or, by some accident, might hurt a limb. But that Nature, who works all things to perfection, should suffer any pains to breed in our bodies, he thought impossible, and desired to know the reason of so unaccountable an evil. I told him, we fed on a thousand things, which operated contrary to each other; that we ate when we were not hungry, and drank without the provocation of thirst; that we sat whole nights drinking strong liquors, without eating a bit, which disposed us to sloth, inflamed our bodies, and precipitated or prevented digestion. That it would be endless to give him a catalogue of all diseases incident to human bodies, for they could not be fewer than five or six hundred, spread over every limb and joint; in short, every part, external and intestine, having diseases appropriated to each. To remedy which, there was a sort of people bred up among us, in the profession, or pretence, of curing the sick. And, because I had some skill in the faculty, I would, in gratitude to his Honor, let him know the whole mystery and method by which they proceed.

Their fundamental idea is, that all diseases arise from repletion; from whence they conclude that a great evacuation of the body is necessary. Their next business is, from herbs, minerals, gums, oils, shells, salts, juices, seaweed, excrements, barks of trees, serpents, toads, frogs, spiders, dead men's flesh and bones, birds, beasts, and fishes, to form a composition for smell and taste the most abominable, nauseous, and detestable they can possibly contrive, which the stomach immediately rejects with loathing; and this they call a vomit. Or else, from the same storehouse, with some other poisonous additions, they command us to take in a medicine equally annoying and disgusting to the bowels. . . .

But, besides real diseases, we are subject to many that are only imaginary, for which the physicians have invented imaginary cures; these have their several names, and so have the drugs that are proper for them; and with these our female Yahoos are always infested. . . .

## A MODEST PROPOSAL

FOR PREVENTING THE CHILDREN OF POOR PEOPLE  
IN IRELAND FROM BEING A BURDEN TO  
THEIR PARENTS OR COUNTRY, AND  
FOR MAKING THEM BENEFICIAL  
TO THE PUBLIC

1729

[This is the most famous of Swift's tracts on Irish affairs, occasioned by his long residence in Dublin and his concern for the suffering and wrongs of the Irish people; it is also the most terrible example of his caustic irony. Craik remarks: "He adopts the phraseology, the outward style, the mannerisms of the humorist; but it is only to give intensity to the irony." And Prescott: "To overlook Swift's serious purpose is entirely to misunderstand the piece. Take the passage in which Swift proposes remedies, — the expedients rejected, in the ironical presentation, being of course the very ones which he wishes seriously to recommend."]

It is a melancholy object to those who walk through this great town, or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin-doors, crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags, and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers, instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in strolling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants; who, as they grow up, either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country to fight for the Pretender in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes.

I think it is agreed by all parties that this prodigious number of children in the arms, or on the backs, or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is, in the present deplorable state of the kingdom, a very great additional grievance; and therefore whoever could find out a fair, cheap, and easy method of making these children sound, useful members of the commonwealth, would deserve so well of the public as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation.

But my intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the children of professed beggars; it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of infants at a certain age, who are born of parents in effect as little able

to support them, as those who demand our charity in the streets.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of our projectors, I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is true a child just born may be supported by its mother's milk for a solar year, with little other nourishment; at most, not above the value of two shillings, which the mother may certainly get, or the value in scraps, by her lawful occupation of begging; and it is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them in such a manner as, instead of being a charge upon their parents or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall on the contrary contribute to the feeding, and partly to the clothing, of many thousands.

There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary abortions, and that horrid practice of women murdering their bastard children, alas, too frequent among us! sacrificing the poor innocent babes, I doubt more to avoid the expense than the shame, which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.

The number of souls in this kingdom being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand couple whose wives are breeders; from which number I subtract thirty thousand couple, who are able to maintain their own children (although I apprehend there cannot be so many, under the present distresses of the kingdom); but this being granted, there will remain a hundred and seventy thousand breeders. I again subtract fifty thousand, for those women who miscarry, or whose children die by accident or disease within the year. There only remain a hundred and twenty thousand children of poor parents annually born. The question therefore is, How this number shall be reared and provided for? which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed. For we can neither employ them in handicraft or agriculture; we neither build houses (I mean in the country) nor cultivate land; they can very seldom pick up a livelihood by stealing, till they arrive at six years old, except where they are of towardly parts, — although I confess they



learn the rudiments much earlier; during which time they can, however, be properly looked upon only as probationers; as I have been informed by a principal gentleman in the county of Cavan, who protested to me that he never knew above one or two instances under the age of six, even in a part of the kingdom so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that art.

I am assured by our merchants that a boy or a girl before twelve years old is no saleable commodity; and even when they come to this age they will not yield above three pounds, or three pounds and half-a-crown at most, on the exchange; which cannot turn to account either to the parents or kingdom, the charge of nutriment and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now, therefore, humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child, well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee or a ragout.

I do therefore humbly offer it to public consideration, that of the hundred and twenty thousand children already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one-fourth part to be males; which is more than we allow to sheep, black-cattle, or swine; and my reason is, that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages; therefore one male will be sufficient for four females. That the remaining hundred thousand may, at a year old, be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune through the kingdom; always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends; and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and, seasoned with a little pepper or salt, will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

I have reckoned, upon a medium, that a child just born will weigh twelve pounds, and in a solar year, if tolerably nursed, will increase to twenty-eight pounds.

I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children. . . .

I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar's child (in which list I reckon all cottagers, laborers, and four-fifths of the farmers) to be about two shillings per annum, rags included; and I believe no gentleman would repine to give ten shillings for the carcass of a good fat child, which, as I have said, will make four dishes of excellent nutritive meat, when he has only some particular friend, or his own family, to dine with him. Thus the squire will learn to be a good landlord, and grow popular among his tenants; the mother will have eight shillings net profit, and be fit for work till she produces another child.

Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the times require) may flay the carcass; the skin of which, artificially dressed, will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer-boots for fine gentlemen.

As to our city of Dublin, shambles may be appointed for this purpose in the most convenient parts of it, and butchers we may be assured will not be wanting; although I rather recommend buying the children alive, then dressing them hot from the knife, as we do roasting pigs.

A very worthy person, a true lover of his country, and whose virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased, in discoursing on this matter, to offer a refinement upon my scheme. He said that, many gentlemen of this kingdom having of late destroyed their deer, he conceived that the want of venison might be well supplied by the bodies of young lads and maidens, not exceeding fourteen years of age, nor under twelve; so great a number of both sexes in every country being now ready to starve for want of work and service; and these to be disposed of by their parents, if alive, or otherwise by their nearest relations. But, with due deference to so excellent a friend, and so deserving a patriot, I cannot be altogether in his sentiments; for as to the males, my American acquaintance assured me, from frequent experience, that their flesh was generally tough and lean, like that of our schoolboys, by continual exercise, and their taste disagreeable; and to fatten them would not answer the charge. Then as to the females, it would, I think, with humble submis-

sion, be a loss to the public, because they soon would become breeders themselves. And besides, it is not improbable that some scrupulous people might be apt to censure such a practice (although indeed very unjustly), as a little bordering upon cruelty; which, I confess, has always been with me the strongest objection against any project, how well soever intended.

But in order to justify my friend, he confessed that this expedient was put into his head by the famous Psalmanazar, a native of the island Formosa, who came from thence to London above twenty years ago, and in conversation told my friend that in his country, when any young person happened to be put to death, the executioner sold the carcass to persons of quality as a prime dainty; and that in his time the body of a plump girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to poison the emperor, was sold to his imperial majesty's prime minister of state, and other great mandarins of the court, in joints from the gibbet, at four hundred crowns. Neither indeed can I deny that, if the same use were made of several plump young girls in this town, who, without one single groat to their fortunes, cannot stir abroad without a chair, and appear at playhouse and assemblies in foreign fineries which they never will pay for, the kingdom would not be the worse.

Some persons of a desponding spirit are in great concern about that vast number of poor people who are aged, diseased, or maimed; and I have been desired to employ my thoughts, what course may be taken to ease the nation of so grievous an encumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter, because it is very well known that they are every day dying, and rotting, by cold and famine, and filth and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the young laborers, they are now in almost as hopeful a condition; they cannot get work, and consequently pine away for want of nourishment, to a degree that, if at any time they are accidentally hired to common labor, they have not strength to perform it; and thus the country and themselves are happily delivered from the evils to come.

I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my subject. I think the advantages by the proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.



For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the number of Papists, with whom we are yearly overrun, being the principal breeders of the nation, as well as our most dangerous enemies; and who stay at home on purpose to deliver the kingdom to the Pretender, hoping to take their advantage by the absence of so many good Protestants, who have chosen rather to leave their country than stay at home and pay tithes against their conscience to an Episcopal curate.

Secondly, The poorer tenants will have something valuable of their own, which by law may be made liable to distress, and help to pay their landlord's rent; their corn and cattle being already seized, and money a thing unknown.

Thirdly, Whereas the maintenance of a hundred thousand children, from two years old and upward, cannot be computed at less than ten shillings apiece per annum, the nation's stock will be thereby increased fifty thousand pounds per annum, beside the profit of a new dish introduced to the tables of all gentlemen of fortune in the kingdom, who have any refinement in taste. And the money will circulate among ourselves, the goods being entirely of our own growth and manufacture.

Fourthly, The constant breeders, beside the gain of eight shillings sterling per annum by the sale of their children, will be rid of the charge of maintaining them after the first year.

Fifthly, This food would likewise bring great custom to taverns; where the vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best receipts for dressing it to perfection, and, consequently, have their houses frequented by all the fine gentlemen, who justly value themselves upon their knowledge in good eating; and a skillful cook, who understands how to oblige his guests, will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

Sixthly, This would be a great inducement to marriage, which all wise nations have either encouraged by rewards, or enforced by laws and penalties. It would increase the care and tenderness of mothers toward their children, when they were sure of a settlement for life to the poor babes, provided in some sort by the public, to their annual profit or expense. We should see an honest emulation among the married women, which of them could bring the fattest child to the market.

Many other advantages might be enumerated. For instance, the addition of some thousand carcasses in our exportation of

barreled beef; the propagation of swine's flesh, and improvement in the art of making good bacon, so much wanted among us by the great destruction of pigs, too frequent at our table; which are no way comparable in taste or magnificence to a well-grown, fat, yearling child, which, roasted whole, will make a considerable figure at a lord mayor's feast, or any other public entertainment. But this, and many others, I omit, being studious of brevity.

Supposing that one thousand families in this city would be constant customers for infants' flesh, beside others who might have it at merry-meetings, particularly at weddings and christenings, I compute that Dublin would take off annually about twenty thousand carcasses; and the rest of the kingdom (where probably they will be sold somewhat cheaper) the remaining eighty thousand.

I can think of no one objection that will possibly be raised against this proposal, unless it should be urged that the number of people will be thereby much lessened in the kingdom. This I freely own, and it was indeed one principal design in offering it to the world. I desire the reader will observe that I calculate my remedy for this one individual kingdom of Ireland, and for no other that ever was, is, or I think ever can be, upon earth. Therefore let no man talk to me of other expedients: of taxing our absentees at five shillings a pound; of using neither clothes, nor household furniture, except what is our own growth and manufacture; of utterly rejecting the materials and instruments that promote foreign luxury; of curing the expensiveness of pride, vanity, idleness, and gaming in our women; of introducing a vein of parsimony, prudence, and temperance; of learning to love our country, in the want of which we differ even from Laplanders, and the inhabitants of Topinamboo; of quitting our animosities and factions, nor acting any longer like the Jews, who were murdering one another at the very moment their city was taken; of being a little cautious not to sell our country and conscience for nothing; of teaching landlords to have at least one degree of mercy toward their tenants; lastly, of putting a spirit of honesty, industry, and skill into our shopkeepers, who, if a resolution could now be taken to buy only our native goods, would immediately unite to cheat and exact upon us in the price, the measure, and

the goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair proposal of just dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.

Therefore I repeat, let no man talk to me of these and the like expedients, till he has at least some glimpse of hope that there will be ever some hearty and sincere attempt to put them in practice.

But, as to myself, having been wearied out for many years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of success, I fortunately fell upon this proposal; which, as it is wholly new, so it has something solid and real, of no expense and little trouble, full in our own power, and whereby we can incur no danger in disobliging England. For this kind of commodity will not bear exportation, the flesh being of too tender a consistence to admit a long continuance in salt, although perhaps I could name a country which would be glad to eat up our whole nation without it.

After all, I am not so violently bent upon my own opinion as to reject any offer proposed by wise men, which shall be found equally innocent, cheap, easy, and effectual. But before something of that kind shall be advanced in contradiction to my scheme, and offering a better, I desire the author, or authors, will be pleased maturely to consider two points. First, as things now stand, how they will be able to find food and raiment for a hundred thousand useless mouths and backs. And, secondly, there being a round million of creatures in human figure throughout this kingdom, whose whole subsistence put into a common stock would leave them in debt two millions of pounds sterling, adding those who are beggars by profession, to the bulk of farmers, cottagers, and laborers, with the wives and children who are beggars in effect, — I desire those politicians who dislike my overture, and may perhaps be so bold as to attempt an answer, that they will first ask the parents of these mortals, whether they would not at this day think it a great happiness to have been sold for food at a year old, in the manner I prescribe, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual scene of misfortunes as they have since gone through, by the oppression of landlords, the impossibility of paying rent without money or trade, the want of common sustenance, with neither house nor clothes to cover them from



the inclemencies of the weather, and the most inevitable prospect of entailing the like or greater miseries upon their breed for ever.

I profess, in the sincerity of my heart, that I have not the least personal interest in endeavoring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the public good of my country, by advancing our trade, providing for infants, relieving the poor, and giving some pleasure to the rich. I have no children by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old, and my wife past child-bearing.

## RICHARD STEELE

### THE TATLER

[This periodical was founded by Steele, and issued three times a week for 271 numbers, from April, 1709, to January, 1711. Steele himself wrote about 188 of these. The papers were supposed to be written by one Isaac Bickerstaff, a pseudonym which had been used by Swift in certain pamphlets in which he attacked, and predicted the death of, an astrologer named Partridge. (See the allusion to this practical joke in the extracts from the first number.)]

#### NO. I. TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 1709

*Quicquid agunt homines . . . nostri farrago libelli.*—Juv., Sat. I, 85, 86.

THOUGH the other papers which are published for the use of the good people of England have certainly very wholesome effects, and are laudable in their particular kinds, yet they do not seem to come up to the main design of such narrations, which, I humbly presume, should be principally intended for the use of politic persons, who are so public-spirited as to neglect their own affairs to look into transactions of state. Now these gentlemen, for the most part, being men of strong zeal and weak intellects, it is both a charitable and a necessary work to offer something whereby such worthy and well-affected members of the commonwealth may be instructed, after their reading, what to think; which shall be the end and purpose of this my paper; wherein I shall from time to time report and consider all matters of what kind soever that shall occur to me, and publish such my advices and reflections every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday in the week, for the convenience of the post. I have also resolved to have something which may be of entertainment to the fair sex, in honor of whom I have taken the title of this paper. I therefore earnestly desire all persons, without distinction, to take it in for the present gratis, and hereafter at the price of one penny, forbidding all hawkers to take more for it at their peril. And I desire my readers to consider that I am at a very great charge for proper materials for this work, as well as that, before I

resolved upon it, I had settled a correspondence in all parts of the known and knowing world. And forasmuch as this globe is not trodden upon by mere drudges of business only, but that men of spirit and genius are justly to be esteemed as considerable agents in it, we shall not, upon a dearth of news, present you with musty foreign edicts, or dull proclamations, but shall divide our relation of the passages which occur in action or discourse throughout this town, as well as elsewhere, under such dates of places as may prepare you for the matter you are to expect; in the following manner:

All accounts of gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment shall be under the article of White's Chocolate-house; poetry, under that of Will's Coffee-house; learning, under the title of Grecian; foreign and domestic news you will have from St. James's Coffee-house; and what else I shall on any other subject offer, shall be dated from my own apartment.

I once more desire my readers to consider that, as I cannot keep an ingenious man to go daily to Will's under twopence each day merely for his charges, to White's under sixpence, nor to the Grecian without allowing him some plain Spanish, to be as able as others at the learned table, and that a good observer cannot speak with even Kidney<sup>1</sup> at St. James's without clean linen, — I say, these considerations will, I hope, make all persons willing to comply with my humble request (when my gratis stock is exhausted) of a penny apiece; especially since they are sure of some proper amusement, and that it is impossible for me to want means to entertain them, — having, besides the helps of my own parts, the power of divination, and that I can, by casting a figure, tell you all that will happen before it comes to pass. But this last faculty I shall use very sparingly, and not speak of anything until it is passed, for fear of divulging matters which may offend our superiors. . . .

FROM MY OWN APARTMENT.

I am sorry I am obliged to trouble the public with so much discourse upon a matter which I at the very first mentioned as a trifle, viz., the death of Mr. Partridge, under whose name there is an almanac come out for the year 1709, in one page of which it is asserted by the said John Partridge, that he is still

<sup>1</sup> A waiter.



living, and that not only so, but that he was also living some time before, and even at the instant when I writ of his death. I have in another place, and in a paper by itself, sufficiently convinced this man that he is dead; and if he has any shame, I don't doubt but that by this time he owns it to all his acquaintance; for though the legs and arms and whole body of that man may still appear and perform their animal functions, yet since, as I have elsewhere observed, his art is gone, the man is gone. I am, as I said, concerned that this little matter should make so much noise; but since I am engaged, I take myself obliged in honor to go on in my lucubrations, and by the help of these arts of which I am master, as well as my skill in astrological speculations, I shall, as I see occasion, proceed to confute other dead men, who pretend to be in being, that they are actually deceased. I therefore give all men fair warning to mend their manners, for I shall from time to time print bills of mortality;<sup>1</sup> and I beg the pardon of all such who shall be named therein, if they who are good for nothing shall find themselves in the number of the deceased.

No. 25. JUNE 7, 1709

WHITE'S CHOCOLATE-HOUSE.

A letter from a young lady, written in the most passionate terms, wherein she laments the misfortune of a gentleman, her lover, who was lately wounded in a duel, has turned my thoughts to that subject, and inclined me to examine into the causes which precipitate men into so fatal a folly. And as it has been proposed to treat of subjects of gallantry in the article from hence, and no one point of nature is more proper to be considered by the company who frequent this place, than that of duels, it is worth our consideration to examine into this chimerical groundless humor, and to lay every other thought aside till we have stripped it of all its false pretences to credit and reputation amongst men. But I must confess, when I consider what I am going about, and run over in my imagination all the endless crowd of men of honor who will be offended at such a discourse, I am undertaking, methinks, a work worthy an invulnerable hero in romance, rather than a private gentleman with a single rapier. But as I am pretty well acquainted by

<sup>1</sup> See note to page 45.

great opportunities with the nature of man, and know of a truth that all men fight against their will, the danger vanishes, and resolution rises upon this subject. For this reason I shall talk very freely on a custom which all men wish exploded, though no man has courage enough to resist it. But there is one unintelligible word which I fear will extremely perplex my dissertation, and I confess to you I find very hard to explain, which is the term "satisfaction." An honest country gentleman had the misfortune to fall into company with two or three modern men of honor, where he happened to be very ill-treated; and one of the company, being conscious of his offense, sends a note to him in the morning, and tells him he was ready to give him satisfaction. "This is fine doing," says the plain fellow. "Last night he sent me away cursedly out of humor, and this morning he fancies it would be a satisfaction to be run through the body."

As the matter at present stands, it is not to do handsome actions denominates a man of honor; it is enough if he dares to defend ill ones. Thus you often see a common sharper in competition with a gentleman of the first rank, though all mankind is convinced that a fighting gamester is only a pick-pocket with the courage of a highwayman. One cannot with any patience reflect on the unaccountable jumble of persons and things in this town and nation, which occasions very frequently that a brave man falls by a hand below that of the common hangman, and yet his executioner escapes the clutches of the hangman for doing it. I shall therefore hereafter consider how the bravest men in other ages and nations have behaved themselves upon such incidents as we decide by combat, and show, from their practice, that this resentment neither has its foundation from true reason nor solid fame, but is an imposture, made up of cowardice, falsehood, and want of understanding. For this work, a good history of quarrels would be very edifying to the public, and I apply myself to the town for particulars and circumstances within their knowledge, which may serve to embellish the dissertation with proper cuts. Most of the quarrels I have ever known have proceeded from some valiant coxcomb's persisting in the wrong, to defend some prevailing folly, and preserve himself from the ingenuity of owning a mistake.

By this means it is called "giving a man satisfaction" to urge your offense against him with your sword; which puts me in mind of Peter's order to the keeper, in the *Tale of a Tub*: "If you neglect to do all this, damn you and your generation for ever; and so we bid you heartily farewell." If the contradiction in the very terms of one of our challenges were as well explained, and turned into plain English, would it not run after this manner?

"Sir: Your extraordinary behavior last night, and the liberty you were pleased to take with me, makes me this morning give you this, to tell you, because you are an ill-bred puppy, I will meet you in Hyde Park an hour hence; and because you want both breeding and humanity, I desire you would come with a pistol in your hand, on horseback, and endeavor to shoot me through the head, to teach you more manners. If you fail of doing me this pleasure, I shall say you are a rascal on every post in town. And so, sir, if you will not injure me more, I shall never forgive what you have done already. Pray, sir, do not fail of getting everything ready, and you will infinitely oblige,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant, &c." . . .

No. 95. NOVEMBER 17, 1709

*Interea dulces pendent circum oscula nati;  
Casta pudicitiam servat domus.*

VIRG., *Georg.* ii, 523.

FROM MY OWN APARTMENT.

There are several persons who have many pleasures and entertainments in their possession which they do not enjoy. It is therefore a kind and good office to acquaint them with their own happiness, and turn their attention to such instances of their good fortune which they are apt to overlook. Persons in the married state often want such a monitor, and pine away their days by looking upon the same condition in anguish and murmur which carries with it, in the opinion of others, a complication of all the pleasures of life, and a retreat from its inquietudes.

I am led into this thought by a visit I made an old friend who was formerly my school-fellow. He came to town last week



with his family for the winter, and yesterday morning sent me word his wife expected me to dinner. I am, as it were, at home at that house, and every member of it knows me for their well-wisher. I cannot indeed express the pleasure it is, to be met by the children with so much joy as I am when I go thither; the boys and girls strive who shall come first, when they think it is I that am knocking at the door; and that child which loses the race to me, runs back again to tell the father it is Mr. Bickerstaff. This day I was led in by a pretty girl, that we all thought must have forgot me; for the family has been out of town these two years. Her knowing me again was a mighty subject with us, and took up our discourse at the first entrance. After which they began to rally me upon a thousand little stories they heard in the country about my marriage to one of my neighbor's daughters; upon which the gentleman my friend said: "Nay, if Mr. Bickerstaff marries a child of any of his old companions, I hope mine shall have the preference. There's Mrs. Mary is now sixteen, and would make him as fine a widow as the best of them. But I know him too well; he is so enamored with the very memory of those who flourished in our youth, that he will not so much as look upon the modern beauties. I remember, old gentleman, how often you went home in a day to refresh your countenance and dress, when Teraminta reigned in your heart. As we came up in the coach, I repeated to my wife some of your verses on her."

With such reflections on little passages which happened long ago, we passed our time during a cheerful and elegant meal. After dinner his lady left the room, as did also the children. As soon as we were alone, he took me by the hand. "Well, my good friend," says he, "I am heartily glad to see thee; I was afraid you would never have seen all the company that dined with you to-day again. Do not you think the good woman of the house a little altered, since you followed her from the play-house, to find out who she was, for me?" I perceived a tear fall down his cheek as he spoke, which moved me not a little. But to turn the discourse, said I, "She is not, indeed, quite the creature she was when she returned me the letter I carried from you, and told me she hoped, as I was a gentleman, I would be employed no more to trouble her who had never offended me, but would be so much the gentleman's friend as

to dissuade him from a pursuit which he could never succeed in. You may remember I thought her in earnest, and you were forced to employ your cousin Will, who made his sister get acquainted with her for you. You cannot expect her to be forever fifteen."

"Fifteen?" replied my good friend. "Ah! you little understand, you that have lived a bachelor, how great, how exquisite a pleasure there is in being really beloved! It is impossible that the most beauteous face in nature should raise in me such pleasing ideas as when I look upon that excellent woman. That fading in her countenance is chiefly caused by her watching with me in my fever. This was followed by a fit of sickness, which had like to have carried her off last winter. I tell you sincerely, I have so many obligations to her that I cannot with any sort of moderation think of her present state of health. But as to what you say of fifteen — she gives me every day pleasures beyond what I ever knew in the possession of her beauty when I was in the vigor of youth. Every moment of her life brings me fresh instances of her complacency to my inclinations, and her prudence in regard to my fortune. Her face is to me much more beautiful than when I first saw it; there is no decay in any feature which I cannot trace from the very instant it was occasioned by some anxious concern for my welfare and interests. Thus at the same time, methinks, the love I conceived towards her for what she was, is heightened by my gratitude for what she is. The love of a wife is as much above the idle passion commonly called by that name, as the loud laughter of buffoons is inferior to the elegant mirth of gentlemen. Oh! she is an inestimable jewel. In her examination of her household affairs, she shows a certain fearfulness to find a fault, which makes her servants obey her like children; and the meanest we have has an ingenuous shame for an offense, not always to be seen in children in other families. I speak freely to you, my old friend; ever since her sickness, things that gave me the quickest joy before, turn now to a certain anxiety. As the children play in the next room, I know the poor things by their steps, and am considering what they must do, should they lose their mother in their tender years. The pleasure I used to take in telling my boy stories of the battles, and asking my girl questions about the disposal of her

baby, and the gossiping of it, is turned into inward reflection and melancholy."

He would have gone on in this tender way, when the good lady entered, and, with an inexpressible sweetness in her countenance, told us she had been searching her closet for something very good to treat such an old friend as I was. Her husband's eyes sparkled with pleasure at the cheerfulness of her countenance, and I saw all his fears vanish in an instant. The lady, observing something in our looks which showed we had been more serious than ordinary, and seeing her husband receive her with great concern under a forced cheerfulness, immediately guessed at what we had been talking of; and, applying herself to me, said, with a smile, "Mr. Bickerstaff, don't believe a word of what he tells you. I shall still live to have you for my second, as I have often promised you, unless he takes more care of himself than he has done since his coming to town. You must know, he tells me that he finds London a much more healthy place than the country; for he sees several of his old acquaintance and school-fellows are here young fellows, with fair full-bottomed periwigs. I could scarce keep him this morning from going out open-breasted."

My friend, who is always extremely delighted with her agreeable humor, made her sit down with us. She did it with that easiness which is peculiar to women of sense, and, to keep up the good humor she had brought in with her, turned her railery upon me. "Mr. Bickerstaff, you remember you followed me one night from the playhouse; supposing you should carry me thither to-morrow night, and lead me into the front box."

This put us into a long field of discourse about the beauties who were mothers to the present, and shone in the boxes twenty years ago. I told her I was glad she had transferred so many of her charms, and I did not question but her eldest daughter was within half a year of being a toast. We were pleasing ourselves with this fantastical preferment of the young lady, when on a sudden we were alarmed with the noise of a drum, and immediately entered my little godson, to give me a point of war. His mother, between laughing and chiding, would have put him out of the room; but I would not part with him so. I found, upon conversation with him, though he was a little noisy in his mirth, that the child had excellent parts,



and was a great master of all the learning on the other side eight years old. I perceived him a very great historian in Æsop's fables; but he frankly declared to me his mind that he did not delight in that learning, because he did not believe they were true. For which reason I found he had very much turned his studies, for about a twelvemonth past, into the lives and adventures of Don Belianis of Greece, Guy of Warwick, the Seven Champions, and other historians of that age. I could not but observe the satisfaction the father took in the forwardness of his son; and that these diversions might turn to some profit, I found the boy had made remarks which might be of service to him during the course of his whole life. He would tell you the mismanagements of John Hickathrift, find fault with the passionate temper in Bevis of Southampton, and loved St. George for being the champion of England; and by this means had his thoughts insensibly moulded into the notions of discretion, virtue, and honor.

I was extolling his accomplishments, when the mother told me that the little girl who led me in this morning was in her way a better scholar than he. "Betty," says she, "deals chiefly in fairies and sprites; and sometimes, in a winter night, will terrify the maids with her accounts, till they are afraid to go up to bed."

I sat with them till it was very late, sometimes in merry, sometimes in serious discourse, with this particular pleasure, which gives the only true relish to all conversation, — a sense that every one of us liked each other. I went home considering the different conditions of a married life and that of a bachelor; and I must confess it struck me with a secret concern to reflect that, whenever I shall go off, I shall leave no traces behind me. In this pensive mood I returned to my family, — that is to say, to my maid, my dog, and my cat, who only can be the better or worse for what happens to me.

No. 104. DECEMBER 8, 1709

. . . There were several of us making merry at a friend's house in a country village, when the sexton of the parish church entered the room in a sort of surprise, and told us that, as he was digging a grave in the chancel, a little blow of his pick-axe opened a decayed coffin, in which there were several written

papers. Our curiosity was immediately raised, so that we went to the place where the sexton had been at work, and found a great concourse of people about the grave. Among the rest, there was an old woman who told us the person buried there was a lady whose name I do not think fit to mention, though there is nothing in the story but what tends very much to her honor. This lady lived several years an exemplary pattern of conjugal love, and, dying soon after her husband, who every way answered her character in virtue and affection, made it her death-bed request that all the letters which she had received from him, both before and after her marriage, should be buried in the coffin with her. These I found upon examination were the papers before us. Several of them had suffered so much by time, that I could only pick out a few words, as — “My soul!” “Lilies!” “Roses!” “Dearest angel!” and the like. One of them, which was legible throughout, ran thus:

Madam: If you would know the greatness of my love, consider that of your own beauty. That blooming countenance, that snowy bosom, that graceful person, return every moment to my imagination. The brightness of your eyes hath hindered me from closing mine, since I last saw you. You may still add to your beauties by a smile. A frown will make me the most wretched of men, as I am the most passionate of lovers.<sup>1</sup>

It filled the whole company with a deep melancholy, to compare the description of the letter with the person that occasioned it, who was now reduced to a few crumbling bones and a little mouldering heap of earth. With much ado I deciphered another letter, which begun with “My dear, dear wife.” This gave me a curiosity to see how the style of one written in marriage differed from one written in courtship. To my surprise, I found the fondness rather augmented than lessened, though the panegyric turned upon a different accomplishment. The words were as follow: —

Before this short absence from you, I did not know that I loved you so much as I really do; though at the same time I thought I loved you as much as possible. I am under great apprehensions lest you should have any uneasiness whilst I am defrauded of my share in it, and can't think of tasting any pleasures that you don't partake with me. Pray, my dear, be careful of your health, if for no other reason because you know I could not outlive you. It is natural in absence to make professions of an inviolable con-

<sup>1</sup> These letters are said to have been genuine, and to have been written by Sir Thomas (or Sir John) Chicheley.

stancy; but towards so much merit it is scarce a virtue, especially when it is but a bare return to that of which you have given me such continued proofs ever since our first acquaintance. I am, &c.

It happened that the daughter of these two excellent persons was by when I was reading this letter. At the sight of the coffin, in which was the body of her mother, near that of her father, she melted into a flood of tears. As I had heard a great character of her virtue, and observed in her this instance of filial piety, I could not resist my natural inclination of giving advice to young people, and therefore addressed myself to her. "Young lady," said I, "you see how short is the possession of that beauty in which Nature has been so liberal to you. You find the melancholy sight before you is a contradiction to the first letter that you heard on that subject; whereas you may observe the second letter, which celebrates your mother's constancy, is itself, being found in this place, an argument of it. But, Madam, I ought to caution you not to think the bodies that lie before you, your father and your mother. Know their constancy is rewarded by a nobler union than by this mingling of their ashes, in a state where there is no danger or possibility of a second separation."

NO. 181. JUNE 6, 1710.

. . . The first sense of sorrow I ever knew was upon the death of my father, at which time I was not quite five years of age, but was rather amazed at what all the house meant, than possessed with a real understanding why nobody was willing to play with me. I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a-beating the coffin, and calling "Papa"; for I know not how I had some slight idea that he was locked up there. My mother caught me in her arms, and, transported beyond all patience of the silent grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her embrace, and told me, in a flood of tears, papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under ground, whence he could never come to us again. She was a very beautiful woman, of a noble spirit, and there was a dignity in her grief amidst all the wildness of her transport, which, methought, struck me with an instinct of sorrow which, before I



was sensible of what it was to grieve, seized my very soul, and has made pity the weakness of my heart ever since. The mind in infancy is, methinks, like the body in embryo, and receives impressions so forcible that they are as hard to be removed by reason, as any mark with which a child is born is to be taken away by any future application. Hence it is that good-nature in me is no merit, but, having been so frequently overwhelmed with her tears before I knew the cause of any affliction, or could draw defenses from my own judgment, I imbibed consideration, remorse, and an unmanly gentleness of mind, which has since ensnared me into ten thousand calamities, and from whence I can reap no advantage, except it be that in such a humor as I am now in, I can the better indulge myself in the softnesses of humanity, and enjoy that sweet anxiety which arises from the memory of past afflictions.

We that are very old are better able to remember things which befell us in our distant youth, than the passages of later days. For this reason it is that the companions of my strong and vigorous years present themselves more immediately to me in this office of sorrow. Untimely or unhappy deaths are what we are most apt to lament, so little are we able to make it indifferent when a thing happens, though we know it must happen. Thus we groan under life, and bewail those who are relieved from it. Every object that returns to our imagination raises different passions according to the circumstance of their departure. Who can have lived in an army, and in a serious hour reflect upon the many gay and agreeable men that might long have flourished in the arts of peace, and not join with the imprecations of the fatherless and widow on the tyrant to whose ambition they fell sacrifices? But gallant men who are cut off by the sword move rather our veneration than our pity, and we gather relief enough from their own contempt of death, to make it no evil, which was approached with so much cheerfulness and attended with so much honor. But when we turn our thoughts from the great parts of life on such occasions, and, instead of lamenting those who stood ready to give death to those from whom they had the fortune to receive it, — I say, when we let our thoughts wander from such noble objects, and consider the havoc which is made among the tender and the innocent, pity enters with an unmingled softness, and possesses our souls at once.

Here, were there words to express such sentiments with proper tenderness, I should record the beauty, innocence, and untimely death of the first object my eyes ever beheld with love. The beauteous virgin! How ignorantly did she charm, how carelessly excel! O Death! thou hast right to the bold, to the ambitious, to the high, and to the haughty; but why this cruelty to the humble, to the meek, to the undiscerning, to the thoughtless? Nor age, nor business, nor distress can erase the dear image from my imagination. In the same week I saw her dressed for a ball, and in a shroud. How ill did the habit of Death become the pretty trifler! I still behold the smiling earth —

A large train of disasters were coming on to my memory, when my servant knocked at my closet door, and interrupted me with a letter, attended with a hamper of wine, of the same sort with that which is to be put to sale on Thursday next at Garraway's Coffee-house.<sup>1</sup> Upon the receipt of it, I sent for three of my friends. We are so intimate that we can be company in whatever state of mind we meet, and can entertain each other without expecting always to rejoice. The wine we found to be generous and warming, but with such a heat as moved us rather to be cheerful than frolicsome. It revived the spirits without firing the blood. We commended it till two of the clock this morning, and, having to-day met a little before dinner, we found that, though we drank two bottles a man, we had much more reason to recollect than forget what had passed the night before.

No. 217. TUESDAY, AUGUST 29, 1710

*Atque deos atque astra vocat crudelia mater.*—VIRG. *Eclog.* v, 23.

FROM MY OWN APARTMENT.

As I was passing by a neighbor's house this morning, I overheard the wife of the family speak things to her husband which gave me much disturbance, and put me in mind of a character which I wonder I have so long omitted, and that is an outrageous species of the fair sex which is distinguished by the term Scolds. The generality of women are by nature loqua-

<sup>1</sup> One regrets to note that this is an allusion to an advertisement, which appeared in the same number of the *Tatler*, of the sale of "forty-six hogsheads and one half of extraordinary French claret."

cious; therefore mere volubility of speech is not to be imputed to them, but should be considered with pleasure when it is used to express such passions as tend to sweeten or adorn conversation. But when, through rage, females are vehement in their eloquence, nothing in the world has so ill an effect upon the features; for by the force of it I have seen the most amiable become the most deformed, and she that appeared one of the Graces immediately turned into one of the Furies. I humbly conceive the great cause of this evil may proceed from a false notion the ladies have of what we call a modest woman. They have too narrow a conception of this lovely character, and believe they have not at all forfeited their pretensions to it, provided they have no imputations on their chastity. But alas! the young fellows know they pick out better women in the side-boxes than many of those who pass upon the world and themselves for modest.

Modesty never rages, never murmurs, never pouts; when it is ill-treated, it pines, it beseeches, it languishes. The neighbor I mention is one of your common modest women; that is to say, those as are ordinarily reckoned such. Her husband knows every pain in life with her but jealousy. Now because she is clear in this particular, the man can't say his soul is his own, but she cries, "No modest woman is respected nowadays." What adds to the comedy in this case is that it is very ordinary with this sort of women to talk in the language of distress. They will complain of the forlorn wretchedness of their condition, and then the poor helpless creatures shall throw the next thing they can lay their hands on at the person who offends them. Our neighbor was only saying to his wife she went a little too fine, when she immediately pulled his periwig off, and, stamping it under her feet, wrung her hands and said, "Never modest woman was so used." These ladies of irresistible modesty are those who make virtue unamiable; not that they can be said to be virtuous, but as they live without scandal; and, being under the common denomination of being such, men fear to meet their faults in those who are as agreeable as they are innocent.

I take the bully among men, and the scold among women, to draw the foundation of their actions from the same defect in the mind. A bully thinks honor consists wholly in being



brave, and therefore has regard to no one rule of life, if he preserves himself from the accusation of cowardice. The forward woman knows chastity to be the first merit in a woman, and therefore, since no one can call her one ugly name, she calls all mankind all the rest.

These ladies, where their companions are so imprudent as to take their speeches for any other than exercises of their own lungs, and their husbands' patience, gain by the force of being resisted, and flame with open fury, which is no way to be opposed but by being neglected; though at the same time human frailty makes it very hard to relish the philosophy of contemning even frivolous reproach. There is a very pretty instance of this infirmity in the man of the best sense that ever was, — no less a person than Adam himself. According to Milton's description of the first couple, as soon as they had fallen, and the turbulent passions of anger, hatred, and jealousy first entered their breasts, Adam grew moody, and talked to his wife as you may find it in the 359th page and ninth book of *Paradise Lost*, in the octavo edition; which, out of heroics, and put into domestic style, would run thus: —

“Madam, if my advice had been of any authority with you when that strange desire of gadding possessed you this morning, we had still been happy. But your cursed vanity, and opinion of your own conduct, which is certainly very wavering when it seeks occasions of being proved, has ruined both yourself and me who trusted you.”

Eve had no fan in her hand to ruffle, or tucker to pull down; but with a reproachful air she answered: “Sir, do you impute that to my desire of gadding, which might have happened to yourself with all your wisdom and gravity? The serpent spoke so excellently, and with so good a grace, that — Besides, what harm had I ever done him, that he should design me any? Was I to have been always at your side, I might as well have continued there, and been but your rib still; but if I was so weak a creature as you thought me, why did you not interpose your sage authority more absolutely? You denied me going as faintly as you say I resisted the serpent. Had not you been too easy, neither you nor I had now transgressed.”

Adam replied: “Why, Eve, hast thou the impudence to upbraid me as the cause of thy transgression, for my indulgence

to thee? Thus it will ever be with him who trusts too much to a woman. At the same time that she refuses to be governed, if she suffers by her obstinacy she will accuse the man that shall leave her to herself."

Thus they in mutual accusation spent  
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning;  
And of their vain contest appeared no end.

This to the modern will appear but a very faint piece of conjugal enmity; but you are to consider that they were but just begun to be angry, and they wanted new words for expressing their new passions. The passionate and familiar terms with which the same case, repeated daily for so many thousand years, has furnished the present generation, were not then in use; but the foundation of debate has ever been the same, a contention about their merit and wisdom. Our general mother was a beauty, and hearing that there was another now in the world, could not forbear (as Adam tells her) showing herself, though to the devil, by whom the same vanity made her liable to be betrayed.

I cannot, with all the help of science and astrology, find any other remedy for this evil but what was the medicine in this first quarrel; which was, as appeared in the next book, that they were convinced of their being both weak, but one weaker than the other. . . .

#### ADVERTISEMENT

The season now coming on in which the town will begin to fill, Mr. Bickerstaff gives notice that, from the 1st of October next, he will be much wittier than he has hitherto been.

No. 263. THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1710

*Minima contentos nocte Britannos.* — JUV., *Sat.* ii, 161.

#### FROM MY OWN APARTMENT.

An old friend of mine being lately come to town, I went to see him on Tuesday last about eight o'clock in the evening, with a design to sit with him an hour or two and talk over old stories, but upon inquiring after him, his servant told me he was just gone to bed. The next morning, as soon as I was up and dressed, and had dispatched a little business, I came again

to my friend's house about eleven o'clock, with a design to renew my visit; but upon asking for him, his servant told me he was just sat down to dinner. In short, I found that my old-fashioned friend religiously adhered to the example of his forefathers, and observed the same hours that had been kept in the family ever since the Conquest.

It is very plain that the night was much longer formerly in this island than it is at present. By the night I mean that portion of time which nature has thrown into darkness, and which the wisdom of mankind had formerly dedicated to rest and silence. This used to begin at eight o'clock in the evening, and conclude at six in the morning. The curfew, or eight o'clock bell, was the signal throughout the nation for putting out their candles and going to bed.

Our grandmothers, though they were wont to sit up the last in the family, were all of them fast asleep at the same hours that their daughters are busy at crimp and basset. Modern statesmen are concerting schemes, and engaged in the depth of politics, at the time when their forefathers were laid down quietly to rest, and had nothing in their heads but dreams. As we have thus thrown business and pleasure into the hours of rest, and by that means made the natural night but half as long as it should be, we are forced to piece it out with a great part of the morning; so that near two-thirds of the nation lie fast asleep for several hours in broad daylight. This irregularity is grown so very fashionable at present, that there is scarce a lady of quality in Great Britain that ever saw the sun rise. And if the humor increases in proportion to what it has done of late years, it is not impossible but our children may hear the bellman going about the streets at nine o'clock in the morning, and the watch making their rounds till eleven.

This unaccountable disposition in mankind to continue awake in the night, and sleep in sunshine, has made me inquire whether the same change of inclination has happened to any other animals. For this reason I desired a friend of mine in the country to let me know whether the lark rises as early as he did formerly, and whether the cock begins to crow at his usual hour. My friend has answered me that his poultry are as regular as ever, and that all the birds and the beasts of his neighborhood keep the same hours that they have observed in the



memory of man, and the same which, in all probability, they have kept for these five thousand years.

If you would see the innovations that have been made among us in this particular, you may only look into the hours of colleges, where they still dine at eleven and sup at six, which were doubtless the hours of the whole nation at the time when those places were founded. But at present the courts of justice are scarce opened in Westminster Hall at the time when William Rufus used to go to dinner in it. All business is driven forward: the landmarks of our fathers (if I may so call them) are removed, and planted further up into the day; insomuch that I am afraid our clergy will be obliged, if they expect full congregations, not to look any more upon ten o'clock in the morning as a canonical hour. In my own memory the dinner has crept by degrees from twelve o'clock to three, and where it will fix nobody knows. I have sometimes thought to draw up a memorial in the behalf of supper against dinner, setting forth that the said dinner has made several encroachments upon the said supper, and entered very far upon his frontiers; that he has banished him out of several families, and in all has driven him from his headquarters, and forced him to make his retreat into the hours of midnight; and, in short, that he is now in danger of being entirely confounded and lost in a breakfast. . . .

For my own part, I value an hour in the morning as much as common libertines do an hour at midnight. When I find myself awakened into being, and perceive my life renewed within me, and at the same time see the whole face of nature recovered out of the dark uncomfortable state in which it lay for several hours, my heart overflows with such secret sentiments of joy and gratitude as are a kind of implicit praise to the great Author of Nature. The mind in these early seasons of the day is so refreshed in all its faculties, and borne up with such new supplies of animal spirits, that she finds herself in a state of youth, especially when she is entertained with the breath of flowers, the melody of birds, the dews that hang upon the plants, and all those other sweets of nature that are peculiar to the morning. It is impossible for a man to have this relish of being, this exquisite taste of life, who does not come into the world before it is in all its noise and hurry; who loses the rising of the sun, the still hours of the day, and immediately

upon his first getting up plunges himself into the ordinary cares or follies of the world.

I shall conclude this paper with Milton's inimitable description of Adam's awakening his Eve in Paradise, which indeed would have been a place as little delightful as a barren heath or desert, to those who slept in it. . . .

## THE SPECTATOR

[This periodical was founded jointly by Steele and Addison, and was issued six times a week, from March, 1711, to December, 1712, amounting to 555 numbers; of these Steele wrote some 236. In 1712 the papers were selling at some 10,000 per week, and in bound volumes they had no less success. The supposed author of this periodical was the gentleman called "the Spectator," whose character was sketched by Addison in the first number, and further described by Steele in the fourth, here reproduced.]

No. 4. MONDAY, MARCH 5, 1711

*Egregii mortalem atlique silentii.* — HOR.

AN author, when he first appears in the world, is very apt to believe it has nothing to think of but his performances. With a good share of this vanity in my heart, I made it my business these three days to listen after my own fame; and as I have sometimes met with circumstances which did not displease me, I have been encountered by others which gave me much mortification. It is incredible to think how empty I have in this time observed some part of the species to be, — what mere blanks they are when they first come abroad in the morning, — how utterly they are at a stand until they are set a-going by some paragraph in a newspaper. Such persons are very acceptable to a young author, for they desire no more in anything but to be new, to be agreeable. If I found consolation among such, I was as much disquieted by the incapacity of others. These are mortals who have a certain curiosity without power of reflection, and perused my papers like spectators rather than readers. But there is so little pleasure in inquiries that so nearly concern ourselves (it being the worst way in the world to fame, to be too anxious about it), that upon the whole I resolved for the future to go on in my ordinary way, and, without too much fear or hope about the business of reputation, to

be very careful of the design of my actions, but very negligent of the consequences of them.

It is an endless and frivolous pursuit to act by any other rule than the care of satisfying our own minds in what we do. One would think a silent man, who concerned himself with no one breathing, should be very little liable to misrepresentations; and yet I remember I was once taken up for a Jesuit, for no other reason but my profound taciturnity. It is from this misfortune that, to be out of harm's way, I have ever since affected crowds. He who comes into assemblies only to gratify his curiosity, and not to make a figure, enjoys the pleasures of retirement in a more exquisite degree than he possibly could in his closet; the lover, the ambitious, and the miser, are followed thither by a worse crowd than any they can withdraw from. To be exempt from the passions with which others are tormented, is the only pleasing solitude. I can very justly say with the sage, "I am never less alone than when alone."

As I am insignificant to the company in public places, and as it is visible I do not come thither as most do, to show myself, I gratify the vanity of all who pretend to make an appearance, and have often as kind looks from well-dressed gentlemen and ladies as a poet would bestow upon one of his audience. There are so many gratifications attend this public sort of obscurity, that some little distastes I daily receive have lost their anguish; and I did, the other day, without the least displeasure, overhear one say of me, "That strange fellow"; and another answer, "I have known the fellow's face these twelve years, and so must you; but I believe you are the first ever asked who he was." There are, I must confess, many to whom my person is as well known as that of their nearest relations, who give themselves no farther trouble about calling me by my name or quality, but speak of me very currently by the appellation of Mr. What-d'y-e-call-him.

To make up for these trivial disadvantages, I have the highest satisfaction of beholding all nature with an unprejudiced eye, and, having nothing to do with men's passions or interests, I can, with the greater sagacity, consider their talents, manners, failings, and merits. It is remarkable that those who want any one sense, possess the others with greater force and vivacity. Thus my want of, or rather resignation of, speech



gives me the advantages of a dumb man. I have, methinks, a more than ordinary penetration in seeing, and flatter myself that I have looked into the highest and lowest of mankind, and made shrewd guesses, without being admitted to their conversation, at the inmost thoughts and reflections of all whom I behold. It is from hence that good or ill fortune has no manner of force towards affecting my judgment. I see men flourishing in courts, and languishing in jails, without being prejudiced from their circumstances to their favor or disadvantage; but, from their inward manner of bearing their condition, often pity the prosperous and admire the unhappy.

Those who converse with the dumb know from the turn of their eyes, and the changes of their countenance, their sentiments of the objects before them. I have indulged my silence to such an extravagance, that the few who are intimate with me answer my smiles with concurrent sentences, and argue to the very point I shook my head at, without my speaking. Will Honeycomb was very entertaining the other night at a play, to a gentleman who sat on his right hand, while I was at his left. The gentleman believed Will was talking to himself, when, upon my looking with great approbation at a young thing in a box before us, he said, "I am quite of another opinion. She has, I will allow, a very pleasing aspect, but methinks that simplicity in her countenance is rather childish than innocent." When I observed her a second time, he said, "I grant her dress is very becoming, but perhaps the merit of that choice is owing to her mother; for though," continued he, "I allow a beauty to be as much to be commended for the elegance of her dress as a wit for that of his language, yet if she has stolen the color of her ribands from another, or had advice about her trimmings, I shall not allow her the praise of dress any more than I would call a plagiarist an author."

When I threw my eye towards the next woman to her, Will spoke what I looked, according to his romantic imagination, in the following manner: "Behold, you who dare, that charming virgin! behold the beauty of her person chastised by the innocence of her thoughts. Chastity, good-nature, and affability are the graces that play in her countenance; she knows she is handsome, but she knows she is good. Conscious beauty adorned with conscious virtue! What a spirit is there in those

eyes! What a bloom in that person! How is the whole woman expressed in her appearance! Her air has the beauty of motion, and her look the force of language."

It was prudence to turn away my eyes from this object, and therefore I turned them to the thoughtless creatures who make up the lump of that sex, and move a knowing eye no more than the portraiture of insignificant people by ordinary painters, which are but pictures of pictures.

Thus the working of my own mind is the general entertainment of my life; I never enter into the commerce of discourse with any but my particular friends, and not in public even with them. Such a habit has perhaps raised in me uncommon reflections, but this effect I cannot communicate but by my writings. As my pleasures are almost wholly confined to those of the sight, I take it for a peculiar happiness that I have always had an easy and familiar admittance to the fair sex. If I never praised or flattered, I never belied or contradicted them. As these compose half the world, and are, by the just complaisance and gallantry of our nation, the more powerful part of our people, I shall dedicate a considerable share of these my speculations to their service, and shall lead the young through all the becoming duties of virginity, marriage, and widowhood. When it is a woman's day, in my works, I shall endeavor at a style and air suitable to their understanding. When I say this, I must be understood to mean that I shall not lower but exalt the subjects I treat upon. Discourse for their entertainment is not to be debased, but refined. A man may appear learned without talking sentences, as in his ordinary gesture he discovers he can dance, though he does not cut capers. In a word, I shall take it for the greatest glory of my work, if among reasonable women this paper may furnish tea-table talk. In order to it, I shall treat on matters which relate to females, as they are concerned to approach or fly from the other sex, or as they are tied to them by blood, interest, or affection. Upon this occasion I think it but reasonable to declare that, whatever skill I may have in speculation, I shall never betray what the eyes of lovers say to each other in my presence. At the same time I shall not think myself obliged by this promise to conceal any false protestations which I observe made by glances in public assemblies, but endeavor to make both sexes appear in

their conduct what they are in their hearts. By this means, love, during the time of my speculations, shall be carried on with the same sincerity as any other affair of less consideration. As this is the greatest concern, men shall be from henceforth liable to the greatest reproach for misbehavior in it. Falsehood in love shall hereafter bear a blacker aspect than infidelity in friendship or villainy in business. For this great and good end, all breaches against that noble passion, the cement of society, shall be severely examined. But this, and all other matters loosely hinted at now, and in my former papers, shall have their proper place in my following discourses. The present writing is only to admonish the world that they shall not find me an idle but a busy Spectator.

No. 49. THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 1711

*Hominem pagina nostra sapit.* — MART.

It is very natural for a man who is not turned for mirthful meetings of men, or assemblies of the fair sex, to delight in that sort of conversation which we find in coffee-houses. Here a man of my temper is in his element; for if he cannot talk, he can still be more agreeable to his company, as well as pleased in himself, in being only a hearer. It is a secret known to but few, yet of no small use in the conduct of life, that when you fall into a man's conversation, the first thing you should consider is, whether he has a greater inclination to hear you or that you should hear him. The latter is the more general desire, and I know very able flatterers that never speak a word in praise of the persons from whom they obtain daily favors, but still practice a skillful attention to whatever is uttered by those with whom they converse. We are very curious to observe the behavior of great men and their clients, but the same passions and interests move men in lower spheres; and I (that have nothing else to do but make observations) see in every parish, street, lane, and alley of this populous city, a little potentate that has his court and his flatterers, who lay snares for his affection and favor by the same arts that are practiced upon men in higher stations.

In the place I most usually frequent, men differ rather in the time of day in which they make a figure, than in any real great-



ness above one another. I, who am at the coffee-house at six in the morning, know that my friend Beaver, the haberdasher, has a levee of more undissembled friends and admirers than most of the courtiers or generals of Great Britain. Every man about him has, perhaps, a newspaper in his hand, but none can pretend to guess what step will be taken in any one court of Europe, till Mr. Beaver has thrown down his pipe, and declares what measures the Allies must enter into, upon this new posture of affairs. Our coffee-house is near one of the Inns of Court, and Beaver has the audience and admiration of his neighbors from six till within a quarter of eight, at which time he is interrupted by the students of the house, some of whom are ready dressed for Westminster at eight in a morning, with faces as busy as if they were retained in every cause there, and others come in their night-gowns to saunter away their time, as if they never designed to go thither. I do not know that I meet in any of my walks objects which move both my spleen and laughter so effectually, as those young fellows at the Grecian, Squire's, Searle's, and all other coffee-houses adjacent to the law, who rise early for no other purpose but to publish their laziness. One would think these young virtuosos take a gay cap and slippers, with a scarf and parti-colored gown, to be the ensigns of dignity; for the vain things approach each other with an air which shows they regard one another for their vestments. I have observed that the superiority among these proceeds from an opinion of gallantry and fashion. The gentleman in the strawberry sash, who presides so much over the rest, has, it seems, subscribed to every opera this last winter, and is supposed to receive favors from one of the actresses.

When the day grows too busy for these gentlemen to enjoy any longer the pleasures of their dishabille with any manner of confidence, they give place to men who have business or good sense in their faces, and come to the coffee-house either to transact affairs or enjoy conversation. The persons to whose behavior and discourse I have most regard, are such as are between these two sorts of men; such as have not spirits too active to be happy and well pleased in a private condition, nor complexions too warm to make them neglect the duties and relations of life. Of these sort of men consist the worthier part

of mankind; of these are all good fathers, generous brothers, sincere friends, and faithful subjects. Their entertainments are derived rather from reason than imagination, which is the cause that there is no impatience or instability in their speech or action. You see in their countenances they are at home, and in quiet possession of the present instant as it passes, without desiring to quicken it by gratifying any passion, or prosecuting any new design. These are the men formed for society, and those little communities which we express by the word neighborhood.

The coffee-house is the place of rendezvous to all that live near it, who are thus turned to relish calm and ordinary life. Eubulus presides over the middle hours of the day, when this assembly of men meet together. He enjoys a great fortune handsomely, without launching into expense, and exerts many noble and useful qualities, without appearing in any public employment. His wisdom and knowledge are serviceable to all that think fit to make use of them, and he does the office of a counsel, a judge, an executor, and a friend, to all his acquaintance, not only without the profits which attend such offices, but also without the deference and homage which are usually paid to them. The giving of thanks is displeasing to him. The greatest gratitude you can show him is to let him see that you are a better man for his services, and that you are as ready to oblige others as he is to oblige you.

In the private exigencies of his friends, he lends at legal value considerable sums which he might highly increase by rolling in the public stocks. He does not consider in whose hands his money will improve most, but where it will do most good.

Eubulus has so great an authority in his little diurnal audience, that when he shakes his head at any piece of public news, they all of them appear dejected, and on the contrary, go home to their dinners with a good stomach and cheerful aspect, when Eubulus seems to intimate that things go well. Nay, their veneration towards him is so great that when they are in other company they speak and act after him, are wise in his sentences, and are no sooner sat down at their own tables, but they hope or fear, rejoice or despond, as they saw him do at the coffee-house. In a word, every man is Eubulus as soon as his back is turned.

Having here given an account of the several reigns that succeed each other from daybreak till dinner-time, I shall mention the monarchs of the afternoon on another occasion, and shut up the whole series of them with the history of Tom the Tyrant, who, as the first minister of the coffee-house, takes the government upon him between the hours of eleven and twelve at night, and gives his orders in the most arbitrary manner to the servants below him, as to the disposition of liquors, coal, and cinders.

No. 157. THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 1711

— *Genius, natale comes qui temperat astrum,  
Naturæ deus humanæ mortalis in unum  
Quodque caput.* — HOR.

I am very much at a loss to express by any word that occurs to me in our language, that which is understood by *indoles* in Latin. The natural disposition to any particular art, science, profession, or trade, is very much to be consulted in the care of youth, and studied by men for their own conduct when they form to themselves any scheme of life. It is wonderfully hard, indeed, for a man to judge of his own capacity impartially. That may look great to me which may appear little to another, and I may be carried by fondness towards myself so far as to attempt things too high for my talents and accomplishments. But it is not, methinks, so very difficult a matter to make a judgment of the abilities of others, especially of those who are in their infancy. My commonplace book directs me on this occasion to mention the dawning of greatness in Alexander, who, being asked in his youth to contend for a prize in the Olympic games, answered he would if he had kings to run against him. Cassius, who was one of the conspirators against Cæsar, gave as great a proof of his temper, when in his childhood he struck a playfellow, the son of Sylla, for saying his father was master of the Roman people. Scipio is reported to have answered, when some flatterers at supper were asking him what the Romans should do for a general after his death, "Take Marius." Marius was then a very boy, and had given no instances of his valor; but it was visible to Scipio, from the manners of the youth, that he had a soul for the attempt and execution of great undertakings.



I must confess I have very often with much sorrow bewailed the misfortune of the children of Great Britain, when I consider the ignorance and undiscerning of the generality of schoolmasters. The boasted liberty we talk of is but a mean reward for the long servitude, the many heart-aches and terrors, to which our childhood is exposed in going through a grammar-school. Many of these stupid tyrants exercise their cruelty without any manner of distinction of the capacities of children, or the intention of parents in their behalf. There are many excellent tempers which are worthy to be nourished and cultivated with all possible diligence and care, that were never designed to be acquainted with Aristotle, Tully, or Virgil; and there are as many who have great capacities for understanding every word those great persons have writ, and yet were not born to have any relish of their writings. For want of this common and obvious discerning in those who have the care of youth, we have so many hundred unaccountable creatures every age whipped up into great scholars, that are forever near a right understanding, and will never arrive at it. These are the scandal of letters, and these are generally the men who are to teach others. The sense of shame and honor is enough to keep the world itself in order, without corporal punishment, — much more to train the minds of uncorrupted and innocent children. It happens, I doubt not, more than once in a year, that a lad is chastised for a blockhead, when it is good apprehension that makes him incapable of knowing what his teacher means. A brisk imagination very often may suggest an error which a lad could not have fallen into if he had been as heavy in conjecturing as his master in explaining. But there is no mercy even towards a wrong interpretation of his meaning; the sufferings of the scholar's body are to rectify the mistakes of his mind.

I am confident that no boy who will not be allured to letters without blows, will ever be brought to anything with them. A great or good mind must necessarily be the worse for such indignities, and it is a sad change to lose of its virtue for the improvement of its knowledge. No one who has gone through what they call a great school, but must remember to have seen children of excellent and ingenuous natures (as has afterward appeared in their manhood) — I say no man has passed through this way of education, but must have seen an ingenuous crea-

ture, expiring with shame, with pale looks, beseeching sorrow, and silent tears, throw up its honest eyes, and kneel on its tender knees to an inexorable blockhead, to be forgiven the false quantity of a word in making a Latin verse. The child is punished, and the next day he commits a like crime, and so a third, with the same consequence. I would fain ask any reasonable man whether this lad, in the simplicity of his native innocence, full of shame and capable of any impression from that grace of soul, was not fitter for any purpose in this life, than after that spark of virtue is extinguished in him, though he is able to write twenty verses in an evening?

Seneca says, after his exalted way of talking, "As the immortal gods never learnt any virtue, though they are endued with all that is good, so there are some men who have so natural a propensity to what they should follow, that they learn it almost as soon as they hear it." Plants and vegetables are cultivated into the production of finer fruits than they would yield without that care; and yet we cannot entertain hopes of producing a tender conscious spirit into acts of virtue, without the same methods as are used to cut timber, or give new shape to a piece of stone. It is wholly to this dreadful practice that we may attribute a certain hardness and ferocity which some men, though liberally educated, carry about them in all their behavior. To be bred like a gentleman, and punished like a malefactor, must, as we see it does, produce that illiberal sauciness which we see sometimes in men of letters.

The Spartan boy who suffered the fox, which he had stolen and hid under his coat, to eat into his bowels, I dare say had not half the wit or petulance which we learn at great schools among us; but the glorious sense of honor, or rather fear of shame, which he demonstrated in that action, was worth all the learning in the world without it.

It is, methinks, a very melancholy consideration that a little negligence can spoil us, but great industry is necessary to improve us. The most excellent natures are soon depreciated, but evil tempers are long before they are exalted into good habits. To help this by punishments is the same thing as killing a man to cure him of a distemper; when he comes to suffer punishment in that one circumstance, he is brought below the existence of a rational creature, and is in the state of a brute

that moves only by the admonition of stripes. But since this custom of educating by the lash is suffered by the gentry of Great Britain, I would prevail only that honest heavy lads may be dismissed from slavery sooner than they are at present, and not whipped on to their fourteenth or fifteenth year, whether they expect any progress from them or not. Let the child's capacity be forthwith examined, and he sent to some mechanic way of life, without respect to his birth, if nature designed him for nothing higher; let him go before he has innocently suffered, and is debased into a dereliction of mind for being what it is no guilt to be — a plain man. I would not here be supposed to have said that our learned men of either robe, who have been whipped at school, are not still men of noble and liberal minds; but I am sure they would have been much more so than they are, had they never suffered that infamy.

No. 324. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 1712

*O curvæ in terris animæ, et cælestium inanes!* — PERS.

MR. SPECTATOR: The materials you have collected towards a general history of clubs, make so bright a part of your Speculations, that I think it is but a justice we all owe the learned world, to furnish you with such assistances as may promote that useful work. For this reason I could not forbear communicating to you some imperfect informations of a set of men (if you will allow them a place in that species of being) who have lately erected themselves into a nocturnal fraternity, under the title of the Mohock Club,<sup>1</sup> — a name borrowed, it seems, from a sort of cannibals in India, who subsist upon plundering and devouring all the nations about them. The president is styled Emperor of the Mohocks, and his arms are a Turkish crescent, which his imperial majesty bears at present in a very extraordinary manner engraved upon his forehead. Agreeable to their name, the avowed design of their institution is mischief; and upon this foundation all their rules and orders are framed. An outrageous ambition of doing all possible hurt to their fellow-creatures is the great cement of their assembly, and the only qualification required in the members. In order to exert this principle to its full strength and perfec-

<sup>1</sup> An actual organization, often referred to by writers of the period.



tion, they take care to drink themselves to a pitch, — that is, beyond the possibility of attending to any motions of reason or humanity; then make a general sally, and attack all that are so unfortunate as to walk the streets through which they patrol. Some are knocked down, others stabbed, others cut and carbonadoed. To put the watch to a total rout, and mortify some of those inoffensive militia, is reckoned a *coup d'éclat*. The particular talents by which these misanthropes are distinguished from one another, consist in the various kinds of barbarities which they execute upon their prisoners. Some are celebrated for a happy dexterity in tipping the lion upon them, which is performed by squeezing the nose flat to the face, and boring out the eyes with their fingers. Others are called the dancing-masters, and teach their scholars to cut capers, by running swords through their legs, — a new invention, whether originally French I cannot tell. . . . In this manner they carry on a war against mankind.

I must own, sir, these are only broken, incoherent memoirs of this wonderful society; but they are the best I have been yet able to procure, for, being but of late established, it is not ripe for a just history, — and, to be serious, the chief design of this trouble is to hinder it from ever being so. You have been pleased, out of a concern for the good of your countrymen, to act, under the character of Spectator, not only the part of a looker-on, but an overseer of their actions; and whenever such enormities as this infest the town, we immediately fly to you for redress. I have reason to believe that some thoughtless youngsters, out of a false notion of bravery, and an immoderate fondness to be distinguished for fellows of fire, are insensibly hurried into this senseless, scandalous project. Such will probably stand corrected by your reproofs, especially if you inform them that it is not courage for half a score fellows, mad with wine and lust, to set upon two or three soberer than themselves; and that the manners of Indian savages are not becoming accomplishments to an English fine gentleman. Such of them as have been bullies and scowerers of a long standing, and are grown veterans in this kind of service, are, I fear, too hardened to receive any impressions from your admonitions. But I beg you would recommend to their perusal your ninth Speculation. They may there be taught to take warning from

the club of Duellists, and be put in mind that the common fate of those men of honor was to be hanged. I am, sir,

Your most humble servant,

PHILANTHROPOS.

The following letter is of a quite contrary nature; but I add it here, that the reader may observe, at the same view, how amiable ignorance may be, when it is shown in its simplicities, and how detestable in barbarities. It is written by an honest countryman to his mistress, and came to the hands of a lady of good sense, wrapped about a thread-paper, who has long kept it by her as an image of artless love.

To her I very much respect, MRS. MARGARET CLARK.

Lovely, and O that I could write loving Mrs. Margaret Clark, I pray you let affection excuse presumption. Having been so happy as to enjoy the sight of your sweet countenance and comely body, sometimes when I had occasion to buy treacle or liquorish powder at the apothecary's shop, I am so enamored with you that I can no more keep close my flaming desire to become your servant. And I am the more bold now to write to your sweet self, because I am now my own man, and may match where I please; for my father is taken away, and now I am come to my living, which is ten yard land and a house; and there is never a yard land in our field but is as well worth ten pound a year as a thief's worth a halter, and all my brothers and sisters are provided for. Besides, I have good household stuff, though I say it, both brass and pewter, linens and woolens; and though my home be thatched, yet, if you and I match, it shall go hard but I will have one half of it slated. If you think well of this motion, I will wait upon you as soon as my new clothes is made, and hay-harvest is in. I could, though I say it, have good matches in our town; but my mother (God's peace be with her) charged me upon her death-bed to marry a gentlewoman, one who had been well trained up in sewing and cookery. I do not think but that, if you and I can agree to marry, and lay our means together, I shall be made grand juryman ere two or three years come about, and that will be a great credit to us. If I could have got a messenger for sixpence, I would have sent one on purpose, and some trifle or other for a token of my love, but I hope there is nothing lost for that neither. So, hoping you will take this letter in good part, and answer it with what care and speed you can, I rest and remain, Yours, if my own

MR. GABRIEL BULLOCK,  
now my father is dead.

Swepston, Leicestershire.

When the coal carts come, I shall send oftener, and may come in one of them myself.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the original paper the last part of this letter (beginning "matches in our town") was missing, and Steele observed: "The rest is torn off; and posterity must be contented to know that Mrs. Margaret Clark was very pretty, but are left in the dark as to the name of her lover." In No. 328 he published the conclusion, from a copy sent him by a correspondent, who testified to its authenticity.

## THE GUARDIAN

[This periodical was issued by Steele from March to October, 1713, appearing six times a week; Steele himself wrote some 82 of the papers. Unlike the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, the *Guardian* dealt in part with political subjects, and was concerned in controversy with the Tory *Examiner*. Swift attacked it in his famous *The Importance of the Guardian Considered*.]

No. 34. MONDAY, APRIL 20, 1713

*Mores multorum vidit.* HOR.

It is a most vexatious thing to an old man, who endeavors to square his notions by reason, and to talk from reflection and experience, to fall in with a circle of young ladies at their afternoon tea-table. This happened very lately to be my fate. The conversation, for the first half-hour, was so very rambling that it is hard to say what was talked of, or who spoke least to the purpose. The various motions of the fan, the tossings of the head, intermixed with all the pretty kinds of laughter, made up the greatest part of the discourse. At last this modish way of shining and being witty settled into something like conversation, and the talk ran upon fine gentlemen. From the several characters that were given, and the exceptions that were made, as this or that gentleman happened to be named, I found that a lady is not difficult to be pleased, and that the town swarms with fine gentlemen. A nimble pair of heels, a smooth complexion, a full-bottom wig, a laced shirt, an embroidered suit, a pair of fringed gloves, a hat and feather, — any one or more of these and the like accomplishments ennobles a man, and raises him above the vulgar, in a female imagination. On the contrary, a modest, serious behavior, a plain dress, a thick pair of shoes, a leathern belt, a waistcoat not lined with silk, and such like imperfections, degrade a man, and are so many blots in his escutcheon. I could not forbear smiling at one of the prettiest and liveliest of this gay assembly, who excepted to the gentility of Sir William Hearty, because he wore a frieze coat, and breakfasted upon toast and ale. I pretended to admire the fineness of her taste, and to strike in with her in ridiculing those awkward healthy gentlemen that seem



to make nourishment the chief end of eating. I gave her an account of an honest Yorkshire gentleman, who (when I was a traveler) used to invite his acquaintance at Paris to break their fast with him upon cold roast beef and mum. There was, I remember, a little French marquis, who was often pleased to rally him unmercifully upon beef and pudding, of which our countryman would despatch a pound or two with great alacrity, while this antagonist was piddling at a mushroom or the haunch of a frog. I could perceive the lady was pleased with what I said, and we parted very good friends, by virtue of a maxim I always observe, Never to contradict or reason with a sprightly female. I went home, however, full of a great many serious reflections upon what had passed, and though, in complaisance, I disguised my sentiments, to keep up the good humor of my fair companions, and to avoid being looked upon as a testy old fellow, yet out of the good-will I bear to the sex, and to prevent for the future their being imposed upon by counterfeits, I shall give them the distinguishing marks of a true fine gentleman.

When a good artist would express any remarkable character in sculpture, he endeavors to work up his figure into all the perfections his imagination can form, and to imitate not so much what is, as what may or ought to be. I shall follow their example, in the idea I am going to trace out of a fine gentleman, by assembling together such qualifications as seem requisite to make the character complete. In order to this I shall premise, in general, that by a fine gentleman I mean a man completely qualified as well for the service and good as for the ornament and delight of society. When I consider the frame of mind peculiar to a gentleman, I suppose it graced with all the dignity and elevation of spirit that human nature is capable of. To this I would have joined a clear understanding, a reason free from prejudice, a steady judgment, and an extensive knowledge. When I think of the heart of a gentleman, I imagine it firm and intrepid, void of all inordinate passions, and full of tenderness, compassion, and benevolence. When I view the fine gentleman with regard to his manners, methinks I see him modest without bashfulness, frank and affable without impertinence, obliging and complaisant without servility,

cheerful and in good humor without noise. These amiable qualities are not easily obtained; neither are there many men that have a genius to excel this way. A finished gentleman is perhaps the most uncommon of all the great characters in life. Besides the natural endowments with which this distinguished man is to be born, he must run through a long series of education. 'Before he makes his appearance and shines in the world, he must be principled in religion, instructed in all the moral virtues, and led through the whole course of the polite arts and sciences. He should be no stranger to courts and to camps; he must travel to open his mind, to enlarge his views, to learn the policies and interests of foreign states, as well as to fashion and polish himself, and to get clear of national prejudices, of which every country has its share. To all these more essential improvements he must not forget to add the fashionable ornaments of life, such as are the languages and the bodily exercises most in vogue; neither would I have him think even dress itself beneath his notice.

It is no very uncommon thing in the world to meet with men of probity; there are likewise a great many men of honor to be found. Men of courage, men of sense, and men of letters are frequent; but a true fine gentleman is what one seldom sees. He is properly a compound of the various good qualities that embellish mankind. As the great poet animates all the different parts of learning by the force of his genius, and irradiates all the compass of his knowledge by the lustre and brightness of his imagination, so all the great and solid perfections of life appear in the finished gentleman, with a beautiful gloss and varnish. Everything he says or does is accompanied with a manner, or rather a charm, that draws the admiration and good-will of every beholder.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

#### *for the Benefit of my Female Readers*

N. B. The gilt chariot, the diamond ring, the gold snuff-box, and brocade sword-knot, are no essential parts of a fine gentleman, but may be used by him, provided he casts his eye upon them but once a day.

## MR. STEELE'S APOLOGY FOR HIMSELF

AND HIS WRITINGS, OCCASIONED BY HIS EXPULSION  
FROM THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

1714

[Steele was expelled from the House of Commons on March 18, 1714, having been accused of uttering seditious libels, after the publication of some of his most vigorous political pamphlets. In reply to the majority party, and in self-defense, he issued the *Apology*, which is now chiefly remembered for the summary of his literary career included in the following extract.]

. . . I FLATTER myself that I shall convince all my fellow-subjects of my innocence from the following circumstances, allowed to be of weight in all trials of this nature: from the general character of the offender, the motive to his offense, and the character of the persons who appear for him, opposed to those who are against him. There are some points to be allowed which bear hard against the prisoner at the bar, and we must grant this by way of confessing and avoiding, and give it up, that the defendant has been as great a libertine as a confessor. We will suppose, then, a witness giving an account of him, who, if he spoke true, would say as follows: —

“I have been long acquainted with Mr. Steele, who is accused as a malicious writer, and can give an account of him (from what he used to confess to us his private friends), what was the chief motive of his first appearing in print. Besides this, I have read everything he has writ or published. He first became an author when an ensign of the Guards, a way of life exposed to much irregularity, and, being thoroughly convinced of many things of which he often repented and which he more often repeated, he writ, for his own private use, a little book called *The Christian Hero*, with a design principally to fix upon his own mind a strong impression of virtue and religion, in opposition to a stronger propensity toward unwarrantable pleasures. This secret admonition was too weak; he therefore printed the book with his name, in hopes that a standing testimony against himself, and the eyes of the world (that is to say, of his acquaintance) upon him in a new light, might curb his desires, and make him ashamed of understand-



ing and seeming to feel what was virtuous, and living so quite contrary a life. This had no other good effect but that, from being thought no undelightful companion, he was soon reckoned a disagreeable fellow. One or two of his acquaintance thought fit to misuse him, and try their valor upon him, and everybody he knew measured the least levity in his words and actions with the character of a Christian hero. Thus he found himself slighted, instead of being encouraged, for his declarations as to religion, and it was now incumbent upon him to enliven his character; for which reason he writ the comedy called *The Funeral*, in which (though full of incidents that move laughter) virtue and vice appear just as they ought to do. Nothing can make the town so fond of a man as a successful play, and this, with some particulars enlarged upon to his advantage (for princes never hear good or evil in the manner others do), obtained him the notice of the king, and his name, to be provided for, was in the last table-book ever worn by the glorious and immortal William the Third.

“His next appearance as a writer was in the quality of the lowest minister of state, to wit, in the office of Gazetteer, where he worked faithfully according to order, without ever erring against the rule observed by all ministries, to keep that paper very innocent and very insipid.

“It is believed it was to the reproaches he heard every Gazette-day against the writer of it, that the defendant owes the fortitude of being remarkably negligent of what people say, which he does not deserve, except in so great cases as that now before us. His next productions were still plays, then the *Tatler*, then the *Spectator*, then the *Guardian*, then the *Englishman*. And now, though he has published and scribbled so very much, he may defy any man to find one leaf in all these writings which is not, in point, a defense against this imputation; to find a leaf which does not mediately or immediately tend to the honor of the Queen or the service of the nobility and gentry, or which is not particularly respectful to the universities. Farther this witness sayeth not.” . . .

## JOSEPH ADDISON

### THE SPECTATOR

[For the dates, etc., of this periodical, see above under Steele. Addison wrote 274 of the papers, signing them by one of the four letters in the name of the muse Clio. The most characteristic element in his contributions was that of literary criticism; his purpose in this connection is described in the important passage at the close of No. 409, reprinted below.]

NO. 10. MONDAY, MARCH 12, 1711

*Non aliter quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum*

*Remigiis subigit : si brachia forte remisit,*

*Atque illum in præceps prono rapit alveus amni.* — VIRG.

It is with much satisfaction that I hear this great city inquiring day by day after these my papers, and receiving my morning lectures with a becoming seriousness and attention. My publisher tells me that there are already three thousand of them distributed every day. So that if I allow twenty readers to every paper, which I look upon as a modest computation, I may reckon about threescore thousand disciples in London and Westminster, who I hope will take care to distinguish themselves from the thoughtless herd of their ignorant and unattentive brethren. Since I have raised to myself so great an audience, I shall spare no pains to make their instruction agreeable, and their diversion useful. For which reasons I shall endeavor to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality, that my readers may, if possible, both ways find their account in the speculation of the day. And to the end that their virtue and discretion may not be short, transient, intermitting starts of thought, I have resolved to refresh their memories from day to day, till I have recovered them out of that desperate state of vice and folly into which the age is fallen. The mind that lies fallow but a single day, sprouts up in follies that are only to be killed by a constant and assiduous culture. It was said of Socrates that he brought philosophy down from heaven, to inhabit among men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me that I have brought philosophy out of closets and libraries,

schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses.

I would therefore in a very particular manner recommend these my speculations to all well-regulated families, that set apart an hour in every morning for tea and bread and butter; and would earnestly advise them for their good to order this paper to be punctually served up, and to be looked upon as a part of the tea-equipage.

Sir Francis Bacon observes that a well written book, compared with its rivals and antagonists, is like Moses's serpent, that immediately swallowed up and devoured those of the Egyptians. I shall not be so vain as to think that where the *Spectator* appears, the other public prints will vanish; but shall leave it to my reader's consideration whether, is it not much better to be let into the knowledge of one's self, than to hear what passes in Muscovy or Poland; and to amuse ourselves with such writings as tend to the wearing out of ignorance, passion, and prejudice, than such as naturally conduce to inflame hatreds and make enmities irreconcilable?

In the next place, I would recommend this paper to the daily perusal of those gentlemen whom I cannot but consider as my good brothers and allies, — I mean the fraternity of spectators, who live in the world without having anything to do in it, and, either by the affluence of their fortunes, or laziness of their dispositions, have no other business with the rest of mankind, but to look upon them. Under this class of men are comprehended all contemplative tradesmen, titular physicians, fellows of the Royal Society, Templars that are not given to be contentious, and statesmen that are out of business; in short, every one that considers the world as a theatre, and desires to form a right judgment of those who are the actors on it.

There is another set of men that I must likewise lay a claim to, whom I have lately called the blanks of society, as being altogether unfurnished with ideas, till the business and conversation of the day has supplied them. I have often considered these poor souls with an eye of great commiseration, when I have heard them asking the first man they have met with, whether there was any news stirring? and by that means gathering together materials for thinking. These needy persons do not know what to talk of, till about twelve o'clock in



the morning; for by that time they are pretty good judges of the weather, know which way the wind sits, and whether the Dutch mail be come in. As they lie at the mercy of the first man they meet, and are grave or impertinent all the day long, according to the notions which they have imbibed in the morning, I would earnestly entreat them not to stir out of their chambers till they have read this paper, and to promise them that I will daily instil into them such sound and wholesome sentiments as shall have a good effect on their conversation for the ensuing twelve hours.

But there are none to whom this paper will be more useful, than to the female world. I have often thought there has not been sufficient pains taken in finding out proper employments and diversions for the fair ones. Their amusements seem contrived for them rather as they are women than as they are reasonable creatures, and are more adapted to the sex than to the species. The toilet is their great scene of business, and the right adjusting of their hair the principal employment of their lives. The sorting of a suit of ribbons is reckoned a very good morning's work; and if they make an excursion to a mercer's or a toy-shop, so great a fatigue makes them unfit for anything else all the day after. Their more serious occupations are sewing and embroidery, and their greatest drudgery the preparation of jellies and sweetmeats. This, I say, is the state of ordinary women; though I know there are multitudes of those of a more elevated life and conversation, that move in an exalted sphere of knowledge and virtue, that join all the beauties of the mind to the ornaments of dress, and inspire a kind of awe and respect, as well as love, into their male beholders. I hope to increase the number of these by publishing this daily paper, which I shall always endeavor to make an innocent if not an improving entertainment, and by that means at least divert the minds of my female readers from greater trifles. At the same time, as I would fain give some finishing touches to those which are already the most beautiful pieces in human nature, I shall endeavor to point out all those imperfections that are the blemishes, as well as those virtues which are the embellishments, of the sex. In the meanwhile I hope these my gentle readers, who have so much time on their hands, will not grudge throwing away a quarter of an hour in a day

on this paper, since they may do it without any hindrance to business.

I know several of my friends and well-wishers are in great pain for me, lest I should not be able to keep up the spirit of a paper which I oblige myself to furnish every day; but to make them easy in this particular, I will promise them faithfully to give it over as soon as I grow dull. This I know will be matter of great raillery to the small wits, who will frequently put me in mind of my promise, desire me to keep my word, assure me that it is high time to give over, with many other little pleasantries of the like nature, which men of a little smart genius cannot forbear throwing out against their best friends, when they have such a handle given them of being witty. But let them remember that I do hereby enter my caveat against this piece of raillery.

NO. 16. MONDAY, MARCH 19, 1711

*Quid verum atque decens curo et rogo, et omnis in hoc sum.* — HOR.

I have received a letter desiring me to be very satirical upon the little muff that is now in fashion. Another informs me of a pair of silver garters buckled below the knee, that have been lately seen at the Rainbow Coffee-house in Fleet Street. A third sends me a heavy complaint against fringed gloves. To be brief, there is scarce an ornament of either sex which one or other of my correspondents has not inveighed against with some bitterness, and recommended to my observation. I must, therefore, once for all inform my readers that it is not my intention to sink the dignity of this my paper with reflection upon red heels or top-knots, but rather to enter into the passions of mankind, and to correct those depraved sentiments that give birth to all those little extravagances which appear in their outward dress and behavior. Foppish and fantastic ornaments are only indications of vice, not criminal in themselves. Extinguish vanity in the mind, and you naturally retrench the little superfluities of garniture and equipage. The blossoms will fall of themselves when the root that nourishes them is destroyed.

I shall therefore, as I have said, apply my remedies to the first seeds and principles of an affected dress, without descend-

ing to the dress itself; though at the same time I must own that I have thoughts of creating an officer under me, to be entitled the Censor of Small Wares, and of allotting him one day in the week for the execution of such his office. An operator of this nature might act under me, with the same regard as a surgeon to a physician; the one might be employed in healing those blotches and tumors which break out in the body, while the other is sweetening the blood and rectifying the constitution. To speak truly, the young people of both sexes are so wonderfully apt to shoot out into long swords or sweeping trains, bushy head-dresses or full-bottomed periwigs, with several other encumbrances of dress, that they stand in need of being pruned very frequently, lest they should be oppressed with ornaments, and overrun with the luxuriance of their habits. I am much in doubt whether I should give the preference to a Quaker that is trimmed close, and almost cut to the quick, or to a beau that is loaden with such a redundance of excrescences. I must therefore desire my correspondents to let me know how they approve my project, and whether they think the erecting of such a petty censorship may not turn to the emolument of the public; for I would not do anything of this nature rashly and without advice.

There is another set of correspondents to whom I must address myself in the second place: I mean such as fill their letters with private scandal, and black accounts of particular persons and families. The world is so full of ill-nature that I have lampoons sent me by people who cannot spell, and satires composed by those who scarce know how to write. By the last post in particular, I received a packet of scandal which is not legible, and have a whole bundle of letters in women's hands, that are full of blots and calumnies; insomuch that, when I see the name of Celia, Phillis, Pastora, or the like, at the bottom of a scrawl, I conclude of course that it brings me some account of a fallen virgin, a faithless wife, or an amorous widow. I must therefore inform these my correspondents, that it is not my design to be a publisher of intrigues, or to bring little infamous stories out of their present lurking-holes into broad daylight. If I attack the vicious, I shall only set upon them in a body, and will not be provoked by the worst usage I can receive from others to make an example of any particular



criminal. In short, I have so much of a Drawcansir<sup>1</sup> in me, that I shall pass over a single foe to charge whole armies. It is not Lais or Silenus, but the harlot and the drunkard, whom I shall endeavor to expose; and shall consider the crime as it appears in the species, not as it is circumstanced in an individual. I think it was Caligula who wished the whole city of Rome had but one neck, that he might behead them at a blow. I shall do, out of humanity, what that emperor would have done in the cruelty of his temper, and aim every stroke at a collective body of offenders. At the same time I am very sensible that nothing spreads a paper like private calumny and defamation; but as my speculations are not under this necessity, they are not exposed to this temptation.

In the next place I must apply myself to my party correspondents, who are continually teasing me to take notice of one another's proceedings. How often am I asked by both sides if it is possible for me to be an unconcerned spectator of the rogueries that are committed by the party which is opposite to him that writes the letter. About two days since I was reproached with an old Grecian law, that forbids any man to stand as a neuter, or a looker-on, in the divisions of his country. However, as I am very sensible my paper would lose its whole effect, should it run into the outrages of a party, I shall take care to keep clear of everything which looks that way. If I can any way assuage private inflammations, or allay public ferments, I shall apply my heart to it with my utmost endeavors; but will never let my heart reproach me with having done anything towards increasing those feuds and animosities that extinguish religion, deface government, and make a nation miserable.

What I have said under the three foregoing heads will, I am afraid, very much retrench the number of my correspondents. I shall therefore acquaint my reader that, if he has started any hint which he is not able to pursue, if he has met with any surprising story which he does not know how to tell, if he has discovered any epidemical vice which has escaped my observation, or has heard of any uncommon virtue which he would desire to publish, — in short, if he has any materials that can furnish out an innocent diversion, I shall promise him my best

<sup>1</sup> A hero in *The Rehearsal*, burlesquing Dryden's Almanzor.

assistance in the working of them up for a public entertainment. . . .

No. 18. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 1711

— *Equilis quoque jam migravit ab aure voluptas*  
*Omnis ad incertos oculos et gaudia vana.* — HOR.

It is my design in this paper to deliver down to posterity a faithful account of the Italian opera, and of the gradual progress which it has made upon the English stage; for there is no question but our great-grandchildren will be very curious to know the reason why their forefathers used to sit together like an audience of foreigners in their own country, and to hear whole plays acted before them in a tongue which they did not understand.

*Arisinoe*<sup>1</sup> was the first opera that gave us a taste of Italian music. The great success this opera met with produced some attempts of forming pieces upon Italian plans, which should give a more natural and reasonable entertainment than what can be met with in the elaborate trifles of that nation. This alarmed the poetasters and fiddlers of the town, who were used to deal in a more ordinary kind of ware, and therefore laid down an established rule, which is received as such to this day, "That nothing is capable of being well set to music, that is not nonsense."

This maxim was no sooner received, but we immediately fell to translating the Italian operas; and as there was no danger of hurting the sense of those extraordinary pieces, our authors would often make words of their own which were entirely foreign to the meaning of the passages they pretended to translate; their chief care being to make the numbers of the English verse answer to those of the Italian, that both of them might go to the same tune. Thus the famous song in *Camilla*,

Barbara, si, t'intendo, etc.

Barbarous woman, yes, I know your meaning,

which expresses the resentments of an angry lover, was translated into that English lamentation,

Frail are a lover's hopes, etc.

<sup>1</sup> By Clayton (1705).

And it was pleasant enough to see the most refined persons of the British nation dying away and languishing to notes that were filled with a spirit of rage and indignation. It happened also very frequently,\* where the sense was rightly translated, the necessary transposition of words which were drawn out of the phrase of one tongue into that of another, made the music appear very absurd in one tongue that was very natural in the other. I remember an Italian verse that ran thus, word for word:

And turned my rage into pity;

which the English for rhyme's sake translated,

And into pity turned my rage.

By this means the soft notes that were adapted to pity in the Italian, fell upon the word *rage* in the English; and the angry sounds that were tuned to rage in the original, were made to express *pity* in the translation. It oftentimes happened, likewise, that the finest notes in the air fell upon the most insignificant words in the sentence. I have known the word *and* pursued through the whole gamut, have been entertained with many a melodious *the*, and have heard the most beautiful graces, quavers, and divisions bestowed upon *then*, *for*, and *from*, to the eternal honor of our English particles.

The next step to our refinement was the introducing of Italian actors into our opera, who sung their parts in their own language, at the same time that our countrymen performed theirs in our native tongue. The king or hero of the play generally spoke in Italian, and his slaves answered him in English; the lover frequently made his court, and gained the heart of his princess, in a language which she did not understand. One would have thought it very difficult to have carried on dialogues after this manner, without an interpreter between the persons that conversed together; but this was the state of the English stage for about three years.

At length the audience grew tired of understanding half the opera, and therefore, to ease themselves entirely of the fatigue of thinking, have so ordered it at present, that the whole opera is performed in an unknown tongue. We no longer understand the language of our own stage; insomuch that I have often been afraid, when I have seen our Italian performers chatter-



ing in the vehemence of action, that they have been calling us names, and abusing us among themselves; but I hope, since we do put such an entire confidence in them, they will not talk against us before our faces, though they may do it with the same safety as if it were behind our backs. In the mean time, I cannot forbear thinking how naturally an historian who writes two or three hundred years hence, and does not know the taste of his wise forefathers, will make the following reflection: "In the beginning of the eighteenth century the Italian tongue was so well understood in England, that operas were acted on the public stage in that language."

One scarce knows how to be serious in the confutation of an absurdity that shows itself at the first sight. It does not want any great measure of sense to see the ridicule of this monstrous practice; but what makes it the more astonishing, it is not the taste of the rabble, but of persons of the greatest politeness, which has established it.

If the Italians have a genius for music above the English, the English have a genius for other performances of a much higher nature, and capable of giving the mind a much nobler entertainment. Would one think it was possible, at a time when an author<sup>1</sup> lived that was able to write the *Phædra and Hippolitus*, for a people to be so stupidly fond of the Italian opera, as scarce to give a third day's hearing to that admirable tragedy? Music is certainly a very agreeable entertainment, but if it would take the entire possession of our ears, if it would make us incapable of hearing sense, if it would exclude arts that have a much greater tendency to the refinement of human nature, I must confess I would allow it no better quarter than Plato has done, who banishes it out of his commonwealth.

At present our notions of music are so very uncertain that we do not know what it is we like; only, in general, we are transported with anything that is not English; so it be of a foreign growth, let it be Italian, French, or High Dutch, it is the same thing. In short, our English music is quite rooted out, and nothing yet planted in its stead.

When a royal palace is burnt to the ground, every man is at liberty to present his plan for a new one; and though it be but indifferently put together, it may furnish several hints that

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Smith.

may be of use to a good architect. I shall take the same liberty, in a following paper, of giving my opinion upon the subject of music; which I shall lay down only in a problematical manner, to be considered by those who are masters in the art.

No. 26. FRIDAY, MARCH 30, 1711

*Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas  
Regumque turres, O beate Sexti,  
Vilæ summa brevis spem nos velat inchoare longam:  
Jam te premet nox, fabulæque manes,  
Et domus exilis Plutonia. — HOR.*

When I am in a serious humor, I very often walk by myself in Westminster Abbey; where the gloominess of the place, and the use to which it is applied, with the solemnity of the building, and the condition of the people who lie in it, are apt to fill the mind with a kind of melancholy, or rather thoughtfulness, that is not disagreeable. I yesterday passed a whole afternoon in the churchyard, the cloisters, and the church, amusing myself with the tombstones and inscriptions that I met with in those several regions of the dead. Most of them recorded nothing else of the buried person, but that he was born upon one day, and died upon another; the whole history of his life being comprehended in those two circumstances that are common to all mankind. I could not but look upon these registers of existence, whether of brass or marble, as a kind of satire upon the departed persons, who had left no other memorial of them but that they were born and that they died. They put me in mind of several persons mentioned in the battles of heroic poems, who have sounding names given them, for no other reason but that they may be killed, and are celebrated for nothing but being knocked on the head.

*Γλαυκὸν τε Μέδοντά τε Θερσίλοχόν τε. — HOM.  
Glaucumque, Medontaque, Thersilochumque. — VIRG.*

The life of these men is finely described in Holy Writ by “the path of an arrow,” which is immediately closed up and lost.

Upon my going into the church, I entertained myself with the digging of a grave, and saw, in every shovelful of it that was thrown up, the fragment of a bone or skull intermixed with a kind of fresh mouldering earth that some time or other had a place in the composition of a human body. Upon this, I

began to consider with myself what innumerable multitudes of people lay confused together under the pavement of that ancient cathedral; how men and women, friends and enemies, priests and soldiers, monks and prebendaries, were crumbled amongst one another, and blended together in the same common mass; how beauty, strength, and youth, with old age, weakness and deformity, lay undistinguished in the same promiscuous heap of matter.

After having thus surveyed this great magazine of mortality, as it were, in the lump, I examined it more particularly by the accounts which I found on several of the monuments which are raised in every quarter of that ancient fabric. Some of them were covered with such extravagant epitaphs that, if it were possible for the dead person to be acquainted with them, he would blush at the praises which his friends have bestowed upon him. There are others so excessively modest that they deliver the character of the person departed in Greek or Hebrew, and by that means are not understood once in a twelve-month. In the poetical quarter, I found there were poets who had no monuments, and monuments which had no poets. I observed indeed that the present war had filled the church with many of these uninhabited monuments, which had been erected to the memory of persons whose bodies were perhaps buried in the plains of Blenheim, or in the bosom of the ocean.

I could not but be very much delighted with several modern epitaphs, which are written with great elegance of expression and justness of thought, and therefore do honor to the living as well as to the dead. As a foreigner is very apt to conceive an idea of the ignorance or politeness of a nation, from the turn of their public monuments and inscriptions, they should be submitted to the perusal of men of learning and genius, before they are put in execution. Sir Cloudesly Shovel's monument has very often given me great offense: instead of the brave rough English admiral, which was the distinguishing character of that plain gallant man, he is represented on his tomb by the figure of a beau, dressed in a long periwig, and reposing himself upon velvet cushions under a canopy of state. The inscription is answerable to the monument; for instead of celebrating the many remarkable actions he had performed in the service of his country, it acquaints us only with the manner of his



death, in which it was impossible for him to reap any honor. The Dutch, whom we are apt to despise for want of genius, show an infinitely greater taste of antiquity and politeness in their buildings and works of this nature, than what we meet with in those of our own country. The monuments of their admirals, which have been erected at the public expense, represent them like themselves, and are adorned with rostral crowns and naval ornaments, with beautiful festoons of seaweed, shells, and coral.

But to return to our subject. I have left the repository of our English kings for the contemplation of another day, when I shall find my mind disposed for so serious an amusement. I know that entertainments of this nature are apt to raise dark and dismal thoughts in timorous minds and gloomy imaginations; but for my own part, though I am always serious, I do not know what it is to be melancholy, and can therefore take a view of nature in her deep and solemn scenes with the same pleasure as in her most gay and delightful ones. By this means I can improve myself with those objects which others consider with terror. When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow; when I see kings lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together.

No. 34. MONDAY, APRIL 9, 1711

— *parcit*

*Cognatis maculis similis fera.* — Juv.

The club of which I am a member is very luckily composed of such persons as are engaged in different ways of life, and

deputed, as it were, out of the most conspicuous classes of mankind. By this means I am furnished with the greatest variety of hints and materials, and know everything that passes in the different quarters and divisions, not only of this great city, but of the whole kingdom. My readers, too, have the satisfaction to find that there is no rank or degree among them who have not their representative in this club, and that there is always somebody present who will take care of their respective interests, that nothing may be written or published to the prejudice or infringement of their just rights and privileges.

I last night sat very late in company with this select body of friends, who entertained me with several remarks which they and others had made upon these my speculations, as also with the various success which they had met with among their several ranks and degrees of readers. Will Honeycomb told me, in the softest manner he could, that there were some ladies ("but for your comfort," says Will, "they are not those of the most wit") that were offended at the liberties I had taken with the opera and the puppet-show; that some of them were likewise very much surprised that I should think such serious points as the dress and equipage of persons of quality, proper subjects for raillery.

He was going on, when Sir Andrew Freeport took him up short, and told him that the papers he hinted at had done great good in the city, and that all their wives and daughters were the better for them; and farther added that the whole City thought themselves very much obliged to me for declaring my generous intentions to scourge vice and folly as they appear in a multitude, without condescending to be a publisher of particular intrigues. "In short," says Sir Andrew, "if you avoid that foolish beaten road of falling upon aldermen and citizens, and employ your pen upon the vanity and luxury of courts, your paper must needs be of general use."

Upon this, my friend the Templar told Sir Andrew that he wondered to hear a man of his sense talk after that manner; that the City had always been the province for satire; and that the wits of King Charles's time jested upon nothing else during his whole reign. He then showed, by the examples of Horace, Juvenal, Boileau, and the best writers of every age, that the

follies of the stage and court had never been accounted too sacred for ridicule, how great soever the persons might be that patronized them. "But after all," says he, "I think your railery has made too great an excursion, in attacking several persons of the Inns of Court, and I do not believe you can show me any precedent for your behavior in that particular."

My good friend Sir Roger de Coverley, who had said nothing all this while, began his speech with a Pish! and told us that he wondered to see so many men of sense so very serious upon fooleries. "Let our good friend," says he, "attack every one that deserves it. I would only advise you, Mr. Spectator," applying himself to me, "to take care how you meddle with country squires. They are the ornaments of the English nation, — men of good heads and sound bodies; and, let me tell you, some of them take it ill of you that you mention fox-hunters with so little respect."

Captain Sentry spoke very sparingly on this occasion. What he said was only to commend my prudence in not touching upon the army, and advised me to continue to act discreetly in that point.

By this time I found every subject of my speculations was taken away from me by one or other of the club, and began to think myself in the condition of the good man that had one wife who took a dislike to his gray hair, and another to his black, till by their picking out what each of them had an aversion to, they left his head altogether bald and naked.

While I was thus musing with myself, my worthy friend the clergyman, who — very luckily for me — was at the club that night, undertook my cause. He told us that he wondered any order of persons should think themselves too considerable to be advised. That it was not quality, but innocence, which exempted men from reproof. That vice and folly ought to be attacked wherever they could be met with, and especially when they were placed in high and conspicuous stations of life. He farther added that my paper would only serve to aggravate the pains of poverty, if it chiefly exposed those who are already depressed, and in some measure turned into ridicule, by the meanness of their conditions and circumstances. He afterwards proceeded to take notice of the great use this paper might be of to the public, by reprehending those vices



which are too trivial for the chastisement of the law, and too fantastical for the cognizance of the pulpit. He then advised me to prosecute my undertaking with cheerfulness, and assured me that, whoever might be displeased with me, I should be approved by all those whose praises do honor to the persons on whom they are bestowed.

The whole club pay a particular deference to the discourse of this gentleman, and are drawn into what he says as much by the candid, ingenuous manner with which he delivers himself, as by the strength of argument and force of reason which he makes use of. Will Honeycomb immediately agreed that what he had said was right, and that, for his part, he would not insist upon the quarter which he had demanded for the ladies. Sir Andrew gave up the City with the same frankness. The Templar would not stand out, and was followed by Sir Roger and the Captain, who all agreed that I should be at liberty to carry the war into what quarter I pleased, provided I continued to combat with criminals in a body, and to assault the vice without hurting the person.

This debate, which was held for the good of mankind, put me in mind of that which the Roman triumvirate were formerly engaged in for their destruction. Every man at first stood hard for his friend, till they found that by this means they should spoil their proscription; and at length, making a sacrifice of all their acquaintance and relations, furnished out a very decent execution.

Having thus taken my resolutions to march on boldly in the cause of virtue and good sense, and to annoy their adversaries in whatever degree or rank of men they may be found, I shall be deaf for the future to all the remonstrances that shall be made to me on this account. If Punch grows extravagant, I shall reprimand him very freely. If the stage becomes a nursery of folly and impertinence, I shall not be afraid to advert upon it. In short, if I meet with anything in City, court, or country, that shocks modesty or good manners, I shall use my utmost endeavors to make an example of it. I must, however, entreat every particular person who does me the honor to be a reader of this paper, never to think himself, or any one of his friends or enemies, aimed at in what is said; for I promise him never to draw a faulty character which does not fit at least

a thousand people, or to publish a single paper that is not written in the spirit of benevolence and with a love of mankind.

No. 40. MONDAY, APRIL 16, 1711

*Ac ne forte putes me, quæ facere ipse recusem,  
Cum recte tractant alii, laudare maligne;  
Ille per extentum funem mihi posse videtur  
Ire poeta, meum qui pectus inaniter angit,  
Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,  
Ut magus; et modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis. — HOR.*

The English writers of tragedy are possessed with a notion that when they represent a virtuous or innocent person in distress, they ought not to leave him till they have delivered him out of his troubles, or made him triumph over his enemies. This error they have been led into by a ridiculous doctrine in modern criticism, that they are obliged to an equal distribution of rewards and punishments, and an impartial execution of poetical justice. Who were the first that established this rule I know not; but I am sure it has no foundation in nature, in reason, or in the practice of the ancients. We find that good and evil happen alike to all men on this side the grave; and as the principal design of tragedy is to raise commiseration and terror in the minds of the audience, we shall defeat this great end if we always make virtue and innocence happy and successful. Whatever crosses and disappointments a good man suffers in the body of the tragedy, they will make but small impression on our minds, when we know that in the last act he is to arrive at the end of his wishes and desires. When we see him engaged in the depth of his afflictions, we are apt to comfort ourselves, because we are sure he will find his way out of them, and that his grief, how great soever it may be at present, will soon terminate in gladness. For this reason the ancient writers of tragedy treated men in their plays, as they are dealt with in the world, by making virtue sometimes happy and sometimes miserable, as they found it in the fable which they made choice of, or as it might affect their audience in the most agreeable manner. Aristotle considers the tragedies that were written in either of these kinds, and observes that those which ended unhappily had always pleased the people, and carried away the prize in the public disputes of the stage, from those

that ended happily. Terror and commiseration leave a pleasing anguish in the mind, and fix the audience in such a serious composure of thought, as is much more lasting and delightful than any little transient starts of joy and satisfaction. Accordingly we find that more of our English tragedies have succeeded, in which the favorites of the audience sink under their calamities, than those in which they recover themselves out of them. The best plays of this kind are *The Orphan*, *Venice Preserved*, *Alexander the Great*, *Theodosius*, *All for Love*, *Ædipus*, *Oroonoko*, *Othello*,<sup>1</sup> etc. *King Lear* is an admirable tragedy of the same kind, as Shakespeare wrote it; but as it is reformed<sup>2</sup> according to the chimerical notion of poetical justice, in my humble opinion it has lost half its beauty. At the same time I must allow that there are very noble tragedies which have been framed upon the other plan, and have ended happily; as indeed most of the good tragedies, which have been written since the starting of the above mentioned criticism, have taken this turn: as *The Mourning Bride*, *Tamerlane*, *Ulysses*, *Phædra and Hippolitus*,<sup>3</sup> with most of Mr. Dryden's. I must also allow that many of Shakespeare's, and several of the celebrated tragedies of antiquity, are cast in the same form. I do not therefore dispute against this way of writing tragedies, but against the criticism that would establish this as the only method, and by that means would very much cramp the English tragedy, and perhaps give a wrong bent to the genius of our writers.

The tragi-comedy, which is the product of the English theatre, is one of the most monstrous inventions that ever entered into a poet's thoughts. An author might as well think of weaving the adventures of Æneas and Hudibras into one poem, as of writing such a motley piece of mirth and sorrow. But the absurdity of these performances is so very visible that I shall not insist upon it.

The same objections which are made to tragi-comedy may in some measure be applied to all tragedies that have a double plot in them, which are likewise more frequent upon the Eng-

<sup>1</sup> Of these plays, *The Orphan* and *Venice Preserved* are by Otway, *Alexander* and *Theodosius* by Lee, *All for Love* by Dryden, *Ædipus* by Dryden and Lee, *Oroonoko* by Mrs. Behn.

<sup>2</sup> In an altered version, by Nahum Tate.

<sup>3</sup> *The Mourning Bride* is by Congreve, *Tamerlane* and *Ulysses* by Rowe, *Phædra* by Edmund Smith (from Racine).



lish stage than upon any other; for though the grief of the audience, in such performances, be not changed into another passion, as in tragi-comedies, it is diverted upon another object, which weakens their concern for the principal action, and breaks the tide of sorrow by throwing it into different channels. This inconvenience, however, may in a great measure be cured, if not wholly removed, by the skillful choice of an under-plot, which may bear such a near relation to the principal design as to contribute towards the completion of it, and be concluded by the same catastrophe.

There is also another particular which may be reckoned among the blemishes, or rather the false beauties, of our English tragedy: I mean those particular speeches which are commonly known by the name of "rants." The warm and passionate parts of a tragedy are always the most taking with the audience; for which reason we often see the players pronouncing, in all the violence of action, several parts of the tragedy which the author writ with great temper, and designed that they should have been so acted. I have seen Powell very often raise himself a loud clap by this artifice. The poets that were acquainted with this secret have given frequent occasion for such emotions in the actor, by adding vehemence to words where there was no passion, or inflaming a real passion into fustian. This hath filled the mouths of our heroes with bombast, and given them such sentiments as proceed rather from a swelling than a greatness of mind. Unnatural exclamations, curses, vows, blasphemies, a defiance of mankind, and an outraging of the gods, frequently pass upon the audience for towering thoughts, and have accordingly met with infinite applause. . . .

No. 50. FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 1711

*Nunquam aliud natura, aliud sapientia dixit.* — JUV.

When the four Indian kings were in this country about a twelvemonth ago, I often mixed with the rabble, and followed them a whole day together, being wonderfully struck with the sight of everything that is new or uncommon. I have, since their departure, employed a friend to make many inquiries of their landlord the upholsterer, relating to their manners and conversation, as also concerning the remarks which they made

in this country; for, next to the forming a right notion of such strangers, I should be desirous of learning what ideas they have conceived of us.

The upholsterer, finding my friend very inquisitive about these his lodgers, brought him some time since a little bundle of papers, which he assured him were written by King Sa Ga Yean Qua Rash Tow, and, as he supposes, left behind by some mistake. These papers are now translated, and contain abundance of very odd observations, which I find this little fraternity of kings made during their stay in the isle of Great Britain. I shall present my reader with a short specimen of them in this paper, and may perhaps communicate more to him hereafter. In the article of London are the following words, which without doubt are meant of the church of St. Paul.

“On the most rising part of the town there stands a huge house, big enough to contain the whole nation of which I am king. Our good brother E Tow O Koam, King of the Rivers, is of opinion it was made by the hands of that great God to whom it is consecrated. The Kings of Granajah and of the Six Nations believe that it was created with the earth, and produced on the same day with the sun and moon. But for my own part, by the best information that I could get of this matter, I am apt to think that this prodigious pile was fashioned into the shape it now bears by several tools and instruments, of which they have a wonderful variety in this country. It was probably at first an huge misshapen rock that grew upon the top of the hill, which the natives of the country (after having cut it into a kind of regular figure) bored and hollowed with incredible pains and industry, till they had wrought in it all those beautiful vaults and caverns into which it is divided at this day. As soon as this rock was thus curiously scooped to their liking, a prodigious number of hands must have been employed in chipping the outside of it, which is now as smooth as the surface of a pebble, and is in several places hewn out into pillars, that stand like the trunks of so many trees bound about the top with garlands of leaves. It is probable that when this great work was begun, which must have been many hundred years ago, there was some religion among this people; for they give it the name of a temple, and have a tradition that it was designed for men to pay their devotions in. And indeed

there are several reasons which make us think that the natives of this country had formerly among them some sort of worship, for they set apart every seventh day as sacred; but upon my going into one of these holy houses on that day, I could not observe any circumstance of devotion in their behavior. There was indeed a man in black who was mounted above the rest, and seemed to utter something with a great deal of vehemence; but as for those underneath him, instead of paying their worship to the deity of the place, they were most of them bowing and curtsying to one another, and a considerable number of them fast asleep.

“The queen of the country appointed two men to attend us, that had enough of our language to make themselves understood in some few particulars. But we soon perceived these two were great enemies to one another, and did not always agree in the same story. We could make a shift to gather out of one of them, that this island was very much infested with a monstrous kind of animals, in the shape of men, called Whigs; and he often told us that he hoped we should meet with none of them in our way, for that if we did, they would be apt to knock us down for being kings.

“Our other interpreter used to talk very much of a kind of animal called a Tory, that was as great a monster as the Whig, and would treat us as ill for being foreigners. These two creatures, it seems, are born with a secret antipathy to one another, and engage when they meet as naturally as the elephant and the rhinoceros. But as we saw none of either of these species, we are apt to think that our guides deceived us with misrepresentations and fictions, and amused us with an account of such monsters as are not really in their country.

“These particulars we made a shift to pick out from the discourse of our interpreters, which we put together as well as we could, being able to understand but here and there a word of what they said, and afterwards making up the meaning of it among ourselves. The men of the country are very cunning and ingenious in handicraft works, but withal so very idle that we often saw young lusty rawboned fellows carried up and down the streets in little covered rooms by a couple of porters, who are hired for that service. Their dress is likewise very barbarous, for they almost strangle themselves about the neck,



and bind their bodies with many ligatures, that we are apt to think are the occasion of several distempers among them, which our country is entirely free from. Instead of those beautiful feathers with which we adorn our heads, they often buy up a monstrous bush of hair, which covers their heads, and falls down in a large fleece below the middle of their backs; with which they walk up and down the streets, and are as proud of it as if it was of their own growth.

"We were invited to one of their public diversions, where we hoped to have seen the great men of their country running down a stag or pitching a bar, that we might have discovered who were the persons of the greatest abilities among them; but instead of that, they conveyed us into a huge room lighted up with abundance of candles, where this lazy people sat still above three hours to see several feats of ingenuity performed by others, who it seems were paid for it.

"As for the women of the country, not being able to talk with them, we could only make our remarks upon them at a distance. They let the hair of their heads grow to a great length; but as the men make a great show with heads of hair that are none of their own, the women, who they say have very fine heads of hair, tie it up in a knot, and cover it from being seen. The women look like angels, and would be more beautiful than the sun, were it not for little black spots that are apt to break out in their faces, and sometimes rise in very odd figures.<sup>1</sup> I have observed that those little blemishes wear off very soon; but when they disappear in one part of the face, they are very apt to break out in another, insomuch that I have seen a spot upon the forehead in the afternoon, which was upon the chin in the morning."

The author then proceeds to show the absurdity of breeches and petticoats, with many other curious observations, which I shall reserve for another occasion. I cannot, however, conclude this paper without taking notice that, amidst these wild remarks, there now and then appears something very reasonable. I cannot likewise forbear observing that we are all guilty in some measure of the same narrow way of thinking which we meet with in this abstract of the Indian journal, when we fancy the customs, dresses, and manners of other countries are ridiculous and extravagant, if they do not resemble those of our own.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 81, below.

No. 62.<sup>1</sup> FRIDAY, MAY 11, 1711*Scribendi recte sapere est et principium et fons.* — HOR.

Mr. Locke has an admirable reflection upon the difference of wit and judgment, whereby he endeavors to show the reason why they are not always the talents of the same person. His words are as follow: "And hence, perhaps, may be given some reason of that common observation, that men who have a great deal of wit, and prompt memories, have not always the clearest judgment or deepest reason. For wit lying most in the assemblage of ideas, and putting those together with quickness and variety wherein can be found any resemblance or congruity, thereby to make up pleasant pictures, and agreeable visions in the fancy; judgment, on the contrary, lies quite on the other side, in separating carefully one from another ideas wherein can be found the least difference, thereby to avoid being misled by similitude, and by affinity to take one thing for another. This is a way of proceeding quite contrary to metaphor and allusion, wherein, for the most part, lies that entertainment and pleasantry of wit, which strikes so lively on the fancy, and is therefore so acceptable to all people."

This is, I think, the best and most philosophical account that I have ever met with of wit, which generally, though not always, consists in such a resemblance and congruity of ideas as this author mentions. I shall only add to it, by way of explanation, that every resemblance of ideas is not that which we call wit, unless it be such a one that gives delight and surprise to the reader. These two properties seem essential to wit, more particularly the last of them. In order, therefore, that the resemblance in the ideas be wit, it is necessary that the ideas should not lie too near one another in the nature of things; for where the likeness is obvious, it gives no surprise. To compare one man's singing to that of another, or to represent the whiteness of any object by that of milk and snow, or the variety of its colors by those of the rainbow, cannot be called wit, unless, besides this obvious resemblance, there be some farther congruity discovered in the two ideas, that is capable of giving the reader some surprise. Thus when a poet tells us the bosom of his mistress is as white as snow, there is no wit in the com-

<sup>1</sup> The fifth of six papers on Wit.

parison; but when he adds, with a sigh, it is as cold too, it then grows into wit. Every reader's memory may supply him with innumerable instances of the same nature. For this reason the similitudes in heroic poets, who endeavor rather to fill the mind with great conceptions than to divert it with such as are new and surprising, have seldom anything in them that can be called wit. Mr. Locke's account of wit, with this short explanation, comprehends most of the species of wit, — as metaphors, similitudes, allegories, enigmas, mottos, parables, fables, dreams, visions, dramatic writings, burlesque, and all the methods of allusion. There are many other species of wit, how remote soever they may appear at first sight from the foregoing description, which upon examination will be found to agree with it.

As true wit generally consists in this resemblance and congruity of ideas, false wit chiefly consists in the resemblance and congruity, sometimes of single letters, as in anagrams, chronograms, lipograms, and acrostics; sometimes of syllables, as in echoes and doggerel rhymes; and sometimes of whole sentences or poems, cast into the figures of eggs, axes, or altars. Nay, some carry the notion of wit so far as to ascribe it even to external mimicry, and to look upon a man as an ingenious person that can resemble the tone, posture, or face of another.

As true wit consists in the resemblance of ideas, and false wit in the resemblance of words, according to the foregoing instances, there is another kind of wit which consists partly in the resemblance of ideas, and partly in the resemblance of words, which for distinction sake I shall call mixed wit. This kind of wit is that which abounds in Cowley, more than in any other author that ever wrote. Mr. Waller has likewise a great deal of it. Mr. Dryden is very sparing in it. Milton had a genius much above it. Spenser is in the same class with Milton. The Italians, even in their epic poetry, are full of it. Monsieur Boileau, who formed himself upon the ancient poets, has everywhere rejected it with scorn. . . .

Out of the innumerable branches of mixed wit, I shall choose one instance which may be met with in all the writers of this class. The passion of love in its nature has been thought to resemble fire, for which reason the words *fire* and *flame* are made use of to signify love. The witty poets therefore have



taken an advantage from the double meaning of the word fire, to make an infinite number of witticisms. Cowley, observing the cold regard of his mistress's eyes, and at the same time their power of producing love in him, considers them as burning-glasses made of ice; and, finding himself able to live in the greatest extremities of love, concludes the torrid zone to be habitable. When his mistress has read his letter written in juice of lemon, by holding it to the fire, he desires her to read it over a second time by love's flame. When she weeps, he wishes it were inward heat that distilled those drops from the limbeck. When she is absent, he is beyond eighty, — that is, thirty degrees nearer the Pole than when she is with him. His ambitious love is a fire that naturally mounts upwards; his happy love is the beams of heaven, and his unhappy love flames of hell. When it does not let him sleep, it is a flame that sends up no smoke; when it is opposed by counsel and advice, it is a fire that rages the more by the winds blowing upon it. Upon the dying of a tree in which he had cut his loves, he observed that his written flames had burnt up and withered the tree. When he resolves to give over his passion, he tells us that one burnt like him forever dreads the fire. His heart is an *Ætna*, that, instead of *Vulcan's* shop, encloses *Cupid's* forge in it. His endeavoring to drown his love in wine is throwing oil upon the fire. He would insinuate to his mistress that the fire of love, like that of the sun (which produces so many living creatures), should not only warm, but beget. Love, in another place, cooks pleasure at his fire. Sometimes the poet's heart is frozen in every breast, and sometimes scorched in every eye. Sometimes he is drowned in tears and burnt in love, like a ship set on fire in the middle of the sea.

The reader may observe in every one of these instances, that the poet mixes the qualities of fire with those of love; and, in the same sentence speaking of it both as a passion and as real fire, surprises the reader with those seeming resemblances or contradictions that make up all the wit in this kind of writing. Mixed wit is therefore a composition of pun and true wit, and is more or less perfect as the resemblance lies in the ideas or in the words. Its foundations are laid partly in falsehood and partly in truth; reason puts in her claim for one half of it, and extravagance for the other. The only province, therefore,

for this kind of wit is epigram, or those little occasional poems that in their own nature are nothing else but a tissue of epigrams. I cannot conclude this head of mixed wit without owning that the admirable poet out of whom I have taken the examples of it, had as much true wit as any author that ever writ, and indeed all other talents of an extraordinary genius.

It may be expected, since I am upon this subject, that I should take notice of Mr. Dryden's definition of wit; which, with all the deference that is due to the judgment of so great a man, is not so properly a definition of wit as of good writing in general. Wit, as he defines it, is "a propriety of words and thoughts adapted to the subject." If this be a true definition of wit, I am apt to think that Euclid was the greatest wit that ever set pen to paper. It is certain there never was a greater propriety of words and thoughts adapted to the subject, than what that author has made use of in his *Elements*. I shall only appeal to my reader if this definition agrees with any notion he has of wit. If it be a true one, I am sure Mr. Dryden was not only a better poet, but a greater wit, than Mr. Cowley, and Virgil a much more facetious man than either Ovid or Martial.

Bouhours, whom I look upon to be the most penetrating of all the French critics, has taken pains to show that it is impossible for any thought to be beautiful which is not just, and has not its foundation in the nature of things; that the basis of all wit is truth; and that no thought can be valuable of which good sense is not the ground-work. Boileau has endeavored to inculcate the same notion in several parts of his writings, both in prose and verse. This is that natural way of writing, that beautiful simplicity, which we so much admire in the compositions of the ancients, and which nobody deviates from but those who want strength of genius to make a thought shine in its own natural beauties. Poets who want this strength of genius to give that majestic simplicity to nature which we so much admire in the works of the ancients, are forced to hunt after foreign ornaments, and not to let any piece of wit of what kind soever escape them. I look upon these writers as Goths in poetry, who, like those in architecture, not being able to come up to the beautiful simplicity of the old Greeks and Romans, have endeavored to supply its place with all the extravagancies of an irregular fancy. . . . Were I not

supported by so great an authority as that of Mr. Dryden, I should not venture to observe that the taste of most of our English poets, as well as readers, is extremely Gothic. . . .

No. 70. MONDAY, MAY 21, 1711

*Interdum vulgus rectum videt.* — HOR.

When I traveled, I took a particular delight in hearing the songs and fables that are come from father to son, and are most in vogue among the common people of the countries through which I passed; for it is impossible that anything should be universally tasted and approved by a multitude, though they are only the rabble of a nation, which hath not in it some peculiar aptness to please and gratify the mind of man. Human nature is the same in all reasonable creatures; and whatever falls in with it will meet with admirers amongst readers of all qualities and conditions. Molière, as we are told by Monsieur Boileau, used to read all his comedies to an old woman who was his housekeeper, as she sat with him at her work by the chimney-corner, and could foretell the success of his play in the theatre, from the reception it met at his fire-side; for he tells us the audience always followed the old woman, and never failed to laugh in the same place.

I know nothing which more shows the essential and inherent perfection of simplicity of thought, above that which I call the Gothic manner in writing, than this: the first pleases all kinds of palates, and the latter only such as have formed to themselves a wrong artificial taste upon little fanciful authors and writers of epigram. Homer, Virgil, or Milton, so far as the language of their poems is understood, will please a reader of plain common sense, who would neither relish nor comprehend an epigram of Martial, or a poem of Cowley; so, on the contrary, an ordinary song or ballad that is the delight of the common people, cannot fail to please all such readers as are not unqualified for the entertainment by their affectation or ignorance; and the reason is plain, because the same paintings of nature which recommend it to the most ordinary reader, will appear beautiful to the most refined.

The old song of *Chevy Chase* is the favorite ballad of the common people of England, and Ben Jonson used to say he had



rather have been the author of it than of all his works. Sir Philip Sidney, in his discourse of Poetry, speaks of it in the following words: "I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas, that I found not my heart more moved than with a trumpet; and yet it is sung by some blind crowder with no rougher voice than rude style; which being so evil appareled in the dust and cobweb of that uncivil age, what would it work trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar?" For my own part, I am so professed an admirer of this antiquated song that I shall give my reader a critique upon it, without any further apology for so doing.

The greatest modern critics have laid it down as a rule that an heroic poem should be founded upon some important precept of morality, adapted to the constitution of the country in which the poet writes. Homer and Virgil have formed their plans in this view. As Greece was a collection of many governments, who suffered very much among themselves, and gave the Persian emperor, who was their common enemy, many advantages over them by their mutual jealousies and animosities, Homer, in order to establish among them an union, which was so necessary for their safety, grounds his poem upon the discords of the several Grecian princes who were engaged in a confederacy against an Asiatic prince, and the several advantages which the enemy gained by such their discords. At the time the poem we are now treating of was written, the dissensions of the barons, who were then so many petty princes, ran very high, whether they quarreled among themselves, or with their neighbors, and produced unspeakable calamities to the country. The poet, to deter men from such unnatural contentions, describes a bloody battle and dreadful scene of death, occasioned by the mutual feuds which reigned in the families of an English and Scotch nobleman. That he designed this for the instruction of his poem, we may learn from his four last lines, in which, after the example of the modern tragedians, he draws from it a precept for the benefit of his readers: —

God save the King, and bless the land  
In plenty, joy, and peace;  
And grant henceforth that foul debate  
Twixt noblemen may cease.

The next point observed by the greatest heroic poets, hath been to celebrate persons and actions which do honor to their country: thus Virgil's hero was the founder of Rome, Homer's a prince of Greece; and for this reason Valerius Flaccus and Statius, who were both Romans, might be justly derided for having chosen the expedition of the Golden Fleece, and the Wars of Thebes, for the subject of their epic writings.

The poet before us has not only found out an hero in his own country, but raises the reputation of it by several beautiful incidents. The English are the first who take the field, and the last who quit it. The English bring only fifteen hundred to the battle, and the Scotch two thousand. The English keep the field with fifty-three; the Scotch retire with fifty-five; all the rest on each side being slain in battle. But the most remarkable circumstance of this kind is the different manner in which the Scotch and English kings receive the news of this fight, and of the great men's deaths who commanded in it.

This news was brought to Edinburgh,  
Where Scotland's king did reign,  
That brave Earl Douglas suddenly  
Was with an arrow slain.

O heavy news, King James did say;  
Scotland can witness be,  
I have not any captain more  
Of such account as he.

Like tidings to King Henry came  
Within as short a space,  
That Percy of Northumberland  
Was slain in Chevy-Chase.

Now God be with him, said our King,  
Sith 't will no better be;  
I trust I have within my realm  
Five hundred as good as he.

Yet shall not Scot nor Scotland say  
But I will vengeance take,  
And be revenged on them all  
For brave Lord Percy's sake.

This vow full well the King performed  
After on Humble-down;

In one day fifty knights were slain,  
With lords of great renown.

And of the rest of small account  
Did many thousand die, etc.

At the same time that our poet shows a laudable partiality to his countrymen, he represents the Scots after a manner not unbecoming so bold and brave a people.

Earl Douglas on a milk-white steed,  
Most like a baron bold,  
Rode foremost of the company,  
Whose armor shone like gold.

His sentiments and actions are every way suitable to an hero. "One of us two," says he, "must die. I am an earl as well as yourself, so that you can have no pretence for refusing the combat; however (says he), 't is pity, and indeed would be a sin, that so many innocent men should perish for our sakes; rather let you and I end our quarrel in single fight."

Ere thus I will outbraved be,  
One of us two shall die;  
I know thee well, an earl thou art,  
Lord Percy, so am I.

But trust me, Percy, pity it were,  
And great offense, to kill  
Any of these our harmless men,  
For they have done no ill.

Let thou and I the battle try,  
And set our men aside;  
Accurs'd be he, Lord Percy said,  
By whom this is denied.

When these brave men had distinguished themselves in the battle and in single combat with each other, in the midst of a generous parley, full of heroic sentiments, the Scotch earl falls; and with his dying words encourages his men to revenge his death, representing to them, as the most bitter circumstance of it, that his rival saw him fall.

With that there came an arrow keen  
Out of an English bow,  
Which struck Earl Douglas to the heart  
A deep and deadly blow.



Who never spoke more words than these:  
 Fight on, my merry men all,  
 For why, my life is at an end,  
 Lord Percy sees my fall.

"Merry men," in the language of those times, is no more than a cheerful word for companions and fellow-soldiers. A passage in the eleventh book of Virgil's *Æneids* is very much to be admired, where Camilla, in her last agonies, instead of weeping over the wound she had received, as one might have expected from a warrior of her sex, considers only (like the hero of whom we are now speaking) how the battle should be continued after her death.

*Tum sic expirans, etc.*

A gathering mist o'erclouds her cheerful eyes,  
 And from her cheeks the rosy color flies.  
 Then turns to her whom, of her female train,  
 She trusted most, and thus she speaks with pain:  
 Acca, 't is past! he swims before my sight,  
 Inexorable death, and claims his right.  
 Bear my last words to Turnus, fly with speed,  
 And bid him timely to my charge succeed;  
 Repel the Trojans, and the town relieve;  
 Farewell.—

Turnus did not die in so heroic a manner; though our poet seems to have had his eye upon Turnus's speech in the last verse,

Lord Percy sees my fall.

*Vicisti, et victum tendere palmas  
 Ausonii videre.*<sup>1</sup>

Earl Percy's lamentation over his enemy is generous, beautiful, and passionate; I must only caution the reader not to let the simplicity of the style, which one may well pardon in so old a poet, prejudice him against the greatness of the thought.

Then leaving life, Earl Percy took  
 The dead man by the hand,  
 And said, Earl Douglas, for thy life  
 Would I had lost my land.

<sup>1</sup> "You conquered, and the Ausonii saw the conquered man stretch forth his hands."

O Christ! my very heart doth bleed  
 With sorrow for thy sake;  
 For sure a more renowned knight  
 Mischance did never take.

That beautiful line, "Taking the dead man by the hand," will put the reader in mind of Æneas's behavior towards Lausus, whom he himself had slain as he came to the rescue of his aged father.

At vero ut vultum vidit morientis, et ora,  
 Ora modis Anchisiades pallentia miris;  
 Ingemuit, miserans graviter, dextramque tetendit, etc.

The pious prince beheld young Lausus dead;  
 He grieved, he wept; then grasped his hand, and said:  
 Poor hapless youth! what praises can be paid  
 To worth so great!

I shall take another opportunity to consider the other parts of this old song.

NO. 81. SATURDAY, JUNE 2, 1711

*Qualis ubi audito venantum murmure tigris  
 Horruit in maculas.* — STATIUS.

About the middle of last winter I went to see an opera at the theatre in the Haymarket, where I could not but take notice of two parties of very fine women, that had placed themselves in the opposite side-boxes, and seemed drawn up in a kind of battle array one against another. After a short survey of them, I found they were patched differently; the faces on one hand being spotted on the right side of the forehead, and those upon the other on the left. I quickly perceived that they cast hostile glances upon one another, and that their patches were placed in those different situations, as party signals to distinguish friends from foes. In the middle boxes, between these two opposite bodies, were several ladies who patched indifferently on both sides of their faces, and seemed to sit there with no other intention but to see the opera. Upon inquiry I found that the body of Amazons on my right hand were Whigs, and those on my left Tories; and that those who had placed themselves in the middle boxes were a neutral party, whose faces had not yet declared themselves. These last, however,

as I afterwards found, diminished daily, and took their party with one side or the other; insomuch that I observed in several of them the patches, which were before dispersed equally, are now all gone over to the Whig or Tory side of the face. The censorious say that the men, whose hearts are aimed at, are very often the occasions that one part of the face is thus dishonored, and lies under a kind of disgrace, while the other is so much set off and adorned by the owner; and that the patches turn to the right or to the left, according to the principles of the man who is most in favor. But, whatever may be the motives of a few fantastical coquettes, who do not patch for the public good so much as for their own private advantage, it is certain that there are several women of honor who patch out of principle, and with an eye to the interest of their country. Nay, I am informed that some of them adhere so steadfastly to their party, and are so far from sacrificing their zeal for the public to their passion for any particular person, that in a late draught of marriage articles a lady has stipulated with her husband that, whatever his opinions are, she shall be at liberty to patch on which side she pleases.

I must here take notice that Rosalinda, a famous Whig partisan, has most unfortunately a very beautiful mole on the Tory part of her forehead; which, being very conspicuous, has occasioned many mistakes, and given an handle to her enemies to misrepresent her face, as though it had revolted from the Whig interest. But, whatever this natural patch may seem to insinuate, it is well known that her notions of government are still the same. This unlucky mole, however, has misled several coxcombs, and, like the hanging out of false colors, made some of them converse with Rosalinda in what they thought the spirit of her party, when on a sudden she has given them an unexpected fire, that has sunk them all at once. If Rosalinda is unfortunate in her mole, Nigranilla is as unhappy in a pimple, which forces her, against her inclinations, to patch on the Whig side.

I am told that many virtuous matrons, who formerly have been taught to believe that this artificial spotting of the face was unlawful, are now reconciled, by a zeal for their cause, to what they could not be prompted by a concern for their beauty. This way of declaring war upon one another puts me in mind



of what is reported of the tigress, that several spots rise in her skin when she is angry; or, as Mr. Cowley has imitated the verses that stand as the motto of this paper, —

She swells with angry pride,  
And calls forth all her spots on every side.

When I was in the theatre the time above mentioned, I had the curiosity to count the patches on both sides, and found the Tory patches to be about twenty stronger than the Whig; but to make amends for this small inequality, I the next morning found the whole puppet-show filled with faces spotted after the Whiggish manner. Whether or no the ladies had retreated hither in order to rally their forces, I cannot tell; but the next night they came in so great a body to the opera, that they outnumbered the enemy.

This account of party patches will, I am afraid, appear improbable to those who live at a distance from the fashionable world; but as it is a distinction of a very singular nature, and what perhaps may never meet with a parallel, I think I should not have discharged the office of a faithful Spectator, had I not recorded it.

I have, in former papers, endeavored to expose this party rage in women, as it only serves to aggravate the hatreds and animosities that reign among men, and in a great measure deprives the fair sex of those peculiar charms with which nature has endowed them.

When the Romans and Sabines were at war, and just upon the point of giving battle, the women who were allied to both of them interposed with so many tears and entreaties, that they prevented the mutual slaughter which threatened both parties, and united them together in a firm and lasting peace. I would recommend this noble example to our British ladies, at a time when their country is torn with so many unnatural divisions that, if they continue, it will be a misfortune to be born in it. The Greeks thought it so improper for women to interest themselves in competitions and contentions, that for this reason, among others, they forbade them, under pain of death, to be present at the Olympic games, notwithstanding these were the public diversions of all Greece.

As our English women excel those of all nations in beauty,

they should endeavor to outshine them in all other accomplishments proper to the sex, and to distinguish themselves as tender mothers and faithful wives, rather than as furious partisans. Female virtues are of a domestic turn. The family is the proper province for private women to shine in. If they must be showing their zeal for the public, let it not be against those who are perhaps of the same family, or at least of the same religion or nation, but against those who are the open, professed, undoubted enemies of their faith, liberty and country. When the Romans were pressed with a foreign enemy, the ladies voluntarily contributed all their rings and jewels to assist the government under the public exigence, which appeared so laudable an action in the eyes of their countrymen, that from thenceforth it was permitted by a law to pronounce public orations at the funeral of a woman in praise of the deceased person, which till that time was peculiar to men. Would our English ladies, instead of sticking on a patch against those of their own country, show themselves so truly public-spirited as to sacrifice every one her necklace against the common enemy, what decrees ought not to be made in favor of them?

Since I am recollecting upon this subject such passages as occur to my memory out of ancient authors, I cannot omit a sentence in the celebrated funeral oration of Pericles which he made in honor of those brave Athenians that were slain in a fight with the Lacedemonians. After having addressed himself to the several ranks and orders of his countrymen, and shown them how they should behave themselves in the public cause, he turns to the female part of his audience: "And as for you," (says he) "I shall advise you in very few words: aspire only to those virtues that are peculiar to your sex; follow your natural modesty, and think it your greatest commendation not to be talked of one way or other."

No. 159. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1711

*Omnem, quæ nunc obducta tuenti  
Mortales hebetat visus tibi, et humida circum  
Caligat, nubem eripiam.* — VIRG.

When I was at Grand Cairo I picked up several oriental manuscripts, which I have still by me. Among others I met

with one entitled "The Visions of Mirzah," which I have read over with great pleasure. I intend to give it to the public when I have no other entertainment for them; and shall begin with the first vision, which I have translated word for word as follows: —

"On the fifth day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always keep holy, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hills of Bagdat, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer. As I was here airing myself on the tops of the mountains, I fell into a profound contemplation on the vanity of human life; and, passing from one thought to another, 'Surely,' said I, 'man is but a shadow and life a dream.' Whilst I was thus musing, I cast my eyes towards the summit of a rock that was not far from me, where I discovered one in the habit of a shepherd, with a musical instrument in his hand. As I looked upon him he applied it to his lips, and began to play upon it. The sound of it was exceeding sweet, and wrought into a variety of tunes that were inexpressibly melodious, and altogether different from anything I had ever heard. They put me in mind of those heavenly airs that are played to the departed souls of good men upon their first arrival in Paradise, to wear out the impressions of the last agonies, and qualify them for the pleasures of that happy place. My heart melted away in secret raptures.

"I had been often told that the rock before me was the haunt of a genius, and that several had been entertained with music who had passed by it, but never heard that the musician had before made himself visible. When he had raised my thoughts, by those transporting airs which he played, to taste the pleasures of his conversation, as I looked upon him like one astonished, he beckoned to me, and by the waving of his hand directed me to approach the place where he sat. I drew near with that reverence which is due to a superior nature; and as my heart was entirely subdued by the captivating strains I had heard, I fell down at his feet and wept. The genius smiled upon me with a look of compassion and affability that familiarized him to my imagination, and at once dispelled all the fears and apprehensions with which I approached him. He lifted me from the ground, and, taking me by the hand,



‘Mirzah,’ said he, ‘I have heard thee in thy soliloquies; follow me.’

“He then led me to the highest pinnacle of the rock, and, placing me on the top of it, ‘Cast thy eyes eastward,’ said he, ‘and tell me what thou seest.’ ‘I see,’ said I, ‘a huge valley, and a prodigious tide of water rolling through it.’ ‘The valley that thou seest,’ said he, ‘is the vale of misery, and the tide of water that thou seest is part of the great tide of eternity.’ ‘What is the reason,’ said I, ‘that the tide I see rises out of a thick mist at one end, and again loses itself in a thick mist at the other?’ ‘What thou seest,’ said he, ‘is that portion of eternity which is called time, measured out by the sun, and reaching from the beginning of the world to its consummation. Examine now,’ said he, ‘this sea that is thus bounded with darkness at both ends, and tell me what thou discoverest in it.’ ‘I see a bridge,’ said I, ‘standing in the midst of the tide.’ ‘The bridge thou seest,’ said he, ‘is human life; consider it attentively.’ Upon a more leisurely survey of it, I found that it consisted of threescore and ten entire arches, with several broken arches, which, added to those that were entire, made up the number about an hundred. As I was counting the arches the genius told me that this bridge consisted at first of a thousand arches; but that a great flood swept away the rest, and left the bridge in the ruinous condition I now beheld it. ‘But tell me further,’ said he, ‘what thou discoverest on it.’

“‘I see multitudes of people passing over it,’ said I, ‘and a black cloud hanging on each end of it.’ As I looked more attentively, I saw several of the passengers dropping through the bridge, into the great tide that flowed underneath it; and, upon further examination, perceived there were innumerable trap-doors that lay concealed in the bridge, which the passengers no sooner trod upon, but they fell through them into the tide and immediately disappeared. These hidden pitfalls were set very thick at the entrance of the bridge, so that throngs of people no sooner broke through the cloud, but many of them fell into them. They grew thinner towards the middle, but multiplied and lay closer together towards the end of the arches that were entire.

“There were indeed some persons — but their number was very small — that continued a kind of hobbling march on

the broken arches, but fell through one after another, being quite tired and spent with so long a walk.

"I passed some time in the contemplation of this wonderful structure, and the great variety of objects which it presented. My heart was filled with a deep melancholy to see several dropping unexpectedly in the midst of mirth and jollity, and catching at everything that stood by them to save themselves. Some were looking up towards the heavens in a thoughtful posture, and in the midst of a speculation stumbled and fell out of sight. Multitudes were very busy in the pursuit of bubbles that glittered in their eyes and danced before them, but often, when they thought themselves within the reach of them, their footing failed, and down they sunk. In this confusion of objects, I observed some with scimitars in their hands, and others with urinals, who ran to and fro upon the bridge, thrusting several persons on trap-doors which did not seem to lie in their way, and which they might have escaped, had they not been thus forced upon them.

"The genius, seeing me indulge myself in this melancholy prospect, told me I had dwelt long enough upon it. 'Take thine eyes off the bridge,' said he, 'and tell me if thou yet seest anything thou dost not comprehend.' Upon looking up, 'What mean,' said I, 'those great flights of birds that are perpetually hovering about the bridge, and settling upon it from time to time? I see vultures, harpies, ravens, cormorants; and among many other feathered creatures several little winged boys, that perch in great numbers upon the middle arches.' 'These,' said the genius, 'are envy, avarice, superstition, despair, love, with the like cares and passions that infest human life.'

"I here fetched a deep sigh. 'Alas,' said I, 'man was made in vain! how is he given away to misery and mortality! tortured in life, and swallowed up in death!' The genius, being moved with compassion towards me, bid me quit so uncomfortable a prospect. 'Look no more,' said he, 'on man in the first stage of his existence, in his setting out for eternity; but cast thine eye on that thick mist into which the tide bears the several generations of mortals that fall into it.' I directed my sight as I was ordered, and (whether or no the good genius strengthened it with any supernatural force, or dissipated part of the mist that was before too thick for the eye to penetrate)

I saw the valley opening at the further end, and spreading forth into an immense ocean, that had a huge rock of adamant running through the midst of it, and dividing it into two equal parts. The clouds still rested on one half of it, insomuch that I could discover nothing in it; but the other appeared to me a vast ocean planted with innumerable islands, that were covered with fruits and flowers, and interwoven with a thousand little shining seas that ran among them. I could see persons dressed in glorious habits, with garlands upon their heads, passing among the trees, lying down by the sides of fountains, or resting on beds of flowers; and could hear a confused harmony of singing birds, falling waters, human voices, and musical instruments. Gladness grew in me upon the discovery of so delightful a scene. I wished for the wings of an eagle, that I might fly away to those happy seats; but the genius told me there was no passage to them, except through the gates of death that I saw opening every moment upon the bridge. 'The islands,' said he, 'that lie so fresh and green before thee, and with which the whole face of the ocean appears spotted as far as thou canst see, are more in number than the sands on the sea-shore; there are myriads of islands behind those which thou here discoverest, reaching further than thine eye or even thine imagination can extend itself. These are the mansions of good men after death, who, according to the degree and kinds of virtue in which they excelled, are distributed among these several islands, which abound with pleasures of different kinds and degrees, suitable to the relishes and perfections of those who are settled in them; every island is a paradise accommodated to its respective inhabitants. Are not these, O Mirzah, habitations worth contending for? Does life appear miserable, that gives thee opportunities of earning such a reward? Is death to be feared, that will convey thee to so happy an existence? Think not man was made in vain, who has such an eternity reserved for him.' I gazed with inexpressible pleasure on these happy islands. At length said I, 'Show me now, I beseech thee, the secrets that lie hid under those dark clouds which cover the ocean on the other side of the rock of adamant.' The genius making me no answer, I turned about to address myself to him a second time, but I found that he had left me; I then turned again to the vision which I had been so long contem-



plating, but instead of the rolling tide, the arched bridge, and the happy islands, I saw nothing but the long hollow valley of Bagdat, with oxen, sheep, and camels grazing upon the sides of it."

The end of the first vision of Mirzah.

No. 267.<sup>1</sup> SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1712

*Cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Graii.* — PROPERT.

There is nothing in nature more irksome than general discourses, especially when they turn chiefly upon words. For this reason I shall waive the discussion of that point which was started some years since, whether Milton's *Paradise Lost* may be called an heroic poem. Those who will not give it that title may call it, if they please, a divine poem. It will be sufficient to its perfection, if it has in it all the beauties of the highest kind of poetry; and as for those who allege it is not an heroic poem, they advance no more to the diminution of it, than if they should say Adam is not Æneas, nor Eve Helen.

I shall therefore examine it by the rules of epic poetry, and see whether it falls short of the *Iliad* or *Æneid* in the beauties which are essential to that kind of writing. The first thing to be considered in an epic poem is the fable, which is perfect or imperfect, according as the action which it relates is more or less so. This action should have three qualifications in it. First, it should be but one action; secondly, it should be an entire action; and thirdly, it should be a great action. To consider the action of the *Iliad*, *Æneid*, and *Paradise Lost*, in these three several lights. Homer, to preserve the unity of his action, hastens into the midst of things, as Horace has observed. Had he gone up to Leda's egg, or begun much later, even at the rape of Helen, or the investing of Troy, it is manifest that the story of the poem would have been a series of several actions. He therefore opens his poem with the discord of his princes, and artfully interweaves, in the several succeeding parts of it, an account of everything material which relates to them, and had passed before this fatal dissension. After the same manner Æneas makes his first appearance in the Tyrrhene seas, and within sight of Italy, because the action proposed to be cele-

<sup>1</sup> The first of eighteen papers on *Paradise Lost*. See page 207, below.

brated was that of his settling himself in Latium. But because it was necessary for the reader to know what had happened to him in the taking of Troy, and in the preceding parts of his voyage, Virgil makes his hero relate it by way of episode in the second and third books of the *Æneid*; the contents of both which books come before those of the first book in the thread of the story, though, for preserving of this unity of action, they follow it in the disposition of the poem. Milton, in imitation of these two great poets, opens his *Paradise Lost* with an infernal council plotting the fall of man, which is the action he proposed to celebrate; and as for those great actions, the battle of the angels and the creation of the world (which preceded in point of time, and which, in my opinion, would have entirely destroyed the unity of his principal action, had he related them in the same order that they happened), he cast them into the fifth, sixth, and seventh books, by way of episode to this noble poem.

Aristotle himself allows that Homer has nothing to boast of as to the unity of his fable, though at the same time that great critic and philosopher endeavors to palliate this imperfection in the Greek poet, by imputing it in some measure to the very nature of an epic poem. Some have been of opinion that the *Æneid* also labors in this particular, and has episodes which may be looked upon as excrescences rather than as parts of the action. On the contrary, the poem which we have now under our consideration hath no other episodes than such as naturally arise from the subject, and yet is filled with such a multitude of astonishing incidents, that it gives us at the same time a pleasure of the greatest variety, and of the greatest simplicity; uniform in its nature, though diversified in the execution.

I must observe also that as Virgil, in the poem which was designed to celebrate the original of the Roman empire, has described the birth of its great rival, the Carthaginian commonwealth, Milton, with the like art, in his poem on the fall of man has related the fall of those angels who are his professed enemies. Besides the many other beauties in such an episode, its running parallel with the great action of the poem hinders it from breaking the unity so much as another episode would have done, that had not so great an affinity with the principal subject. In short, this is the same kind of beauty which the critics

admire in *The Spanish Friar* or *The Double Discovery*,<sup>1</sup> where the two different plots look like counterparts and copies of one another.

The second qualification required in the action of an epic poem is that it should be an entire action. An action is entire when it is complete in all its parts; or, as Aristotle describes it, when it consists of a beginning, a middle, and an end. Nothing should go before it, be intermixed with it, or follow after it that is not related to it; as, on the contrary, no single step should be omitted in that just and regular process which it must be supposed to take from its original to its consummation. Thus we see the anger of Achilles in its birth, its continuance, and effects; and Æneas's settlement in Italy, carried on through all the oppositions in his way to it both by sea and land. The action in Milton excels (I think) both the former in this particular; we see it contrived in hell, executed upon earth, and punished by Heaven. The parts of it are told in the most distinct manner, and grow out of one another in the most natural order.

The third qualification of an epic poem is its greatness. The anger of Achilles was of such consequence that it embroiled the kings of Greece, destroyed the heroes of Asia, and engaged all the gods in factions. The settlement of Æneas in Italy produced the Cæsars, and gave birth to the Roman empire. Milton's subject was still greater than either of the former; it does not determine the fate of single persons or nations, but of a whole species. The united powers of hell are joined together for the destruction of mankind, which they effected in part, and would have completed, had not Omnipotence itself interposed. The principal actors are man in his greatest perfection, and woman in her highest beauty. Their enemies are the fallen angels; the Messiah their friend, and the Almighty their protector. In short, everything that is great in the whole circle of being, whether within the verge of nature or out of it, has a proper part assigned it in this admirable poem.

In poetry, as in architecture, not only the whole, but the principal members, and every part of them, should be great. I will not presume to say that the book of games in the *Æneid*, or that in the *Iliad*, are not of this nature, nor to reprehend

<sup>1</sup> By Dryden.



Virgil's simile of a top, and many others of the same kind in the *Iliad*, as liable to any censure in this particular; but I think we may say, without derogating from those wonderful performances, that there is an indisputable and unquestioned magnificence in every part of *Paradise Lost*, and indeed a much greater than could have been formed upon any pagan system.

But Aristotle, by the greatness of the action, does not only mean that it should be great in its nature, but also in its duration, or in other words, that it should have a due length in it, as well as what we properly call greatness. The just measure of this kind of magnitude he explains by the following similitude. An animal no bigger than a mite cannot appear perfect to the eye, because the sight takes it in at once, and has only a confused idea of the whole, and not a distinct idea of all its parts; if on the contrary you should suppose an animal of ten thousand furlongs in length, the eye would be so filled with a single part of it that it could not give the mind an idea of the whole. What these animals are to the eye, a very short or a very long action would be to the memory. The first would be, as it were, lost and swallowed up by it, and the other difficult to be contained in it. Homer and Virgil have shown their principal art in this particular; the action of the *Iliad*, and that of the *Æneid*, were in themselves exceeding short, but are so beautifully extended and diversified by the invention of episodes, and the machinery of gods, with the like poetical ornaments, that they make up an agreeable story, sufficient to employ the memory without overcharging it. Milton's action is enriched with such variety of circumstances, that I have taken as much pleasure in reading the contents of his books as in the best invented story I ever met with. It is possible that the traditions on which the *Iliad* and *Æneid* were built had more circumstances in them than the history of the fall of man, as it is related in Scripture. Besides, it was easier for Homer and Virgil to dash the truth with fiction, as they were in no danger of offending the religion of their country by it. But as for Milton, he had not only a very few circumstances upon which to raise his poem, but was also obliged to proceed with the greatest caution in everything that he added out of his own invention. And indeed, notwithstanding all the restraints he was under, he has filled his story with so many surprising

incidents, which bear so close an analogy with what is delivered in Holy Writ, that it is capable of pleasing the most delicate reader, without giving offense to the most scrupulous.

The modern critics have collected, from several hints in the *Iliad* and *Æneid*, the space of time which is taken up by the action of each of those poems; but as a great part of Milton's story was transacted in regions that lie out of the reach of the sun and the sphere of day, it is impossible to gratify the reader with such a calculation, which indeed would be more curious than instructive; none of the critics, either ancient or modern, having laid down rules to circumscribe the action of an epic poem with any determined number of years, days, or hours. But of this more particular hereafter.

No. 323. TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 1712

*Modo vir, modo femina.* — VIRG.

The Journal<sup>1</sup> with which I presented my reader on Tuesday last, has brought me in several letters with accounts of many private lives cast into that form. I have the Rake's Journal, the Sot's Journal, the Whoremaster's Journal, and among several others a very curious piece, entitled The Journal of a Mohock. By these instances I find that the intention of my last Tuesday's paper has been mistaken by many of my readers. I did not design so much to expose vice as idleness, and aimed at those persons who pass away their time rather in trifles and impertinence than in crimes and immoralities. Offenses of this later kind are not to be dallied with, or treated in so ludicrous a manner. In short, my journal only holds up folly to the light, and shows the disagreeableness of such actions as are indifferent in themselves, and blamable only as they proceed from creatures endowed with reason.

My following correspondent, who calls herself Clarinda, is such a journalist as I require: she seems by her letter to be placed in a modish state of indifference between vice and virtue, and to be susceptible of either, were there proper pains taken with her. Had her journal been filled with gallantries, or such occurrences as had shown her wholly divested of her natural innocence, notwithstanding it might have been more

<sup>1</sup> The "journal of a citizen."

pleasing to the generality of readers, I should not have published it; but as it is only the picture of a life filled with a fashionable kind of gaiety and laziness, I shall set down five days of it, as I have received it from the hand of my correspondent.

DEAR MR. SPECTATOR, — You having set your readers an exercise in one of your last week's papers, I have performed mine according to your orders, and herewith send it you enclosed. You must know, Mr. Spectator, that I am a maiden lady of a good fortune, who have had several matches offered me for these ten years last past, and have at present warm applications made to me by a very pretty fellow. As I am at my own disposal, I come up to town every winter, and pass my time in it after the manner you will find in the following journal, which I began to write upon the very day after your *Spectator* upon that subject.

TUESDAY *night*. Could not go to sleep till one in the morning for thinking of my journal.

WEDNESDAY. *From Eight till Ten*. Drank two dishes of chocolate in bed, and fell asleep after them.

*From Ten to Eleven*. Eat a slice of bread and butter, drank a dish of bohea, read the *Spectator*.

*From Eleven to One*. At my toilette; tried a new head. Gave orders for Veny to be combed and washed. Mem. I look best in blue.

*From One till half an hour after Two*. Drove to the Change. Cheapened a couple of fans.

*Till Four*. At dinner. Mem. Mr. Froth passed by in his new liveries.

*From Four to Six*. Dressed, paid a visit to old Lady Blithe and her sister, having before heard they were gone out of town that day.

*From Six to Eleven*. At basset. Mem. Never set again upon the ace of diamonds.

THURSDAY. *From Eleven at night to Eight in the morning*. Dreamed that I punted to Mr. Froth.

*From Eight to Ten*. Chocolate. Read two acts in *Aurengzebe* a-bed.

*From Ten to Eleven*. Tea-table. Sent to borrow Lady Faddle's Cupid for Veny. Read the play-bills. Received a letter from Mr. Froth. Mem. Locked it up in my strong box.

*Rest of the morning*. Fontange, the tire-woman, her account of my Lady Blithe's wash. Broke a tooth in my little tortoise-shell comb. Sent Frank to know how my Lady Hectic rested after her monkey's leaping out at window. Looked pale. Fontange tells me my glass is not true. Dressed by Three.

*From Three to Four*. Dinner cold before I sat down.

*From Four to Eleven*. Saw company. Mr. Froth's opinion of Milton. His account of the Mohocks. His fancy for a pin-cushion. Picture in the lid of his snuff-box. Old Lady Faddle promises me her woman to cut my hair. Lost five guineas at crimp.

*Twelve o'clock at night*. Went to bed.



FRIDAY. *Eight in the morning.* A-bed. Read over all Mr. Froth's letters. Cupid and Veny.

*Ten o'clock.* Stayed within all day, not at home.

*From Ten to Twelve.* In conference with my mantuamaker. Sorted a suit of ribands. Broke my blue china cup.

*From Twelve to One.* Shut myself up in my chamber, practiced Lady Betty Modely's skuttle.

*One in the afternoon.* Called for my flowered handkerchief. Worked half a violet leaf in it. Eyes ached and head out of order. Threw by my work, and read over the remaining part of *Aurengzebe*.

*From Three to Four.* Dined.

*From Four to Twelve.* Changed my mind, dressed, went abroad, and played at crimp till midnight. Found Mrs. Spitey at home. Conversation: Mrs. Brilliant's necklace false stones. Old Lady Loveday going to be married to a young fellow that is not worth a groat. Miss Prue gone into the country. Tom Townley has red hair. Mem. Mrs. Spitey whispered in my ear that she had something to tell me about Mr. Froth; I am sure it is not true.

*Between Twelve and One.* Dreamed that Mr. Froth lay at my feet, and called me Indamora.

SATURDAY. Rose at eight o'clock in the morning. Sat down to my toilette.

*From Eight to Nine.* Shifted a patch for half an hour before I could determine it. Fixed it above my left eyebrow.

*From Nine to Twelve.* Drank my tea, and dressed.

*From Twelve to Two.* At chapel. A great deal of good company. Mem. The third air in the new opera. Lady Blithe dressed frightfully.

*From Three to Four.* Dined. Mrs. Kitty called upon me to go to the opera before I was risen from table.

*From dinner to Six.* Drank tea. Turned off a footman for being rude to Veny.

*Six o'clock.* Went to the opera. I did not see Mr. Froth till the beginning of the second act. Mr. Froth talked to a gentleman in a black wig. Bowled to a lady in the front box. Mr. Froth and his friend clapped Nicolini in the third act. Mr. Froth cried out "*Ancora*." Mr. Froth led me to my chair. I think he squeezed my hand.

*Eleven at night.* Went to bed. Melancholy dreams. Methought Nicolini said he was Mr. Froth.

SUNDAY. Indisposed.

MONDAY. *Eight o'clock.* Waked by Miss Kitty. *Aurengzebe* lay upon the chair by me. Kitty repeated without book the eight best lines in the play. Went in our mobs to the dumb man, according to appointment. Told me that my lover's name began with a G. Mem. The conjurer was within a letter of Mr. Froth's name, etc.

Upon looking back into this my journal, I find that I am at a loss to

know whether I pass my time well or ill; and indeed never thought of considering how I did it, before I perused your speculation upon that subject. I scarce find a single action in these five days that I can thoroughly approve of, except the working upon the violet leaf, which I am resolved to finish the first day I am at leisure. As for Mr. Froth and Veny, I did not think they took up so much of my time and thoughts as I find they do upon my journal. The latter of them I will turn off if you insist upon it; and if Mr. Froth does not bring matters to a conclusion very suddenly, I will not let my life run away in a dream.

Your humble servant,

CLARINDA.

To resume one of the morals of my first paper, and to confirm Clarinda in her good inclinations, I would have her consider what a pretty figure she would make among posterity, were the history of her whole life published like these five days of it. . . .

No. 409. THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 1712

*Musæo contingere cuncta lepore.* — LUCR.

Gratian very often recommends fine taste as the utmost perfection of an accomplished man. As this word arises very often in conversation, I shall endeavor to give some account of it, and to lay down rules how we may know whether we are possessed of it, and how we may acquire that fine taste of writing which is so much talked of among the polite world.

Most languages make use of this metaphor, to express that faculty of mind which distinguishes all the most concealed faults and nicest perfections in writing. We may be sure that this metaphor would not have been so general in all tongues, had there not been a very great conformity between that mental taste, which is the subject of this paper, and that sensitive taste which gives us a relish of every different flavor that affects the palate. Accordingly we find there are as many degrees of refinement in the intellectual faculty as in the sense which is marked out by this common denomination.

I knew a person who possessed the one in so great a perfection, that, after having tasted ten different kinds of tea, he would distinguish, without seeing the color of it, the particular sort which was offered him; and not only so, but any two sorts of them that were mixed together in an equal proportion. Nay, he has carried the experiment so far as, upon

tasting the composition of three different sorts, to name the parcels from whence the three several ingredients were taken. A man of a fine taste in writing will discern, after the same manner, not only the general beauties and imperfections of an author, but discover the several ways of thinking and expressing himself which diversify him from all other authors, with the several foreign infusions of thought and language, and the particular authors from whom they were borrowed.

After having thus far explained what is generally meant by a fine taste in writing, and shown the propriety of the metaphor which is used on this occasion, I think I may define it to be "that faculty of the soul which discerns the beauties of an author with pleasure, and the imperfections with dislike." If a man would know whether he is possessed of this faculty, I would have him read over the celebrated works of antiquity, which have stood the test of so many different ages and countries, or those works among the moderns which have the sanction of the politer part of our contemporaries. If, upon the perusal of such writings, he does not find himself delighted in an extraordinary manner, or if, upon reading the admired passages in such authors, he finds a coldness and indifference in his thoughts, he ought to conclude, not — as is too usual among tasteless readers — that the author wants those perfections which have been admired in him, but that he himself wants the faculty of discovering them.

He should, in the second place, be very careful to observe whether he tastes the distinguishing perfections, or — if I may be allowed to call them so — the specific qualities of the author whom he peruses; whether he is particularly pleased with Livy for his manner of telling a story, with Sallust for his entering into those internal principles of action which arise from the characters and manners of the persons he describes, or with Tacitus for displaying those outward motives of safety and interest which gave birth to the whole series of transactions which he relates.

He may likewise consider how differently he is affected by the same thought which presents itself in a great writer, from what he is when he finds it delivered by a person of an ordinary genius; for there is as much difference in apprehending a thought clothed in Cicero's language, and that of a common



author, as in seeing an object by the light of a taper or by the light of the sun.

It is very difficult to lay down rules for the acquirement of such a taste as that I am here speaking of. The faculty must in some degree be born with us; and it very often happens that those who have other qualities in perfection are wholly void of this. One of the most eminent mathematicians of the age has assured me that the greatest pleasure he took in reading Virgil was in examining *Æneas's* voyage by the map; as I question not but many a modern compiler of history would be delighted with little more in that divine author than the bare matters of fact.

But, notwithstanding this faculty must in some measure be born in us, there are several methods for cultivating and improving it, and without which it will be very uncertain and of little use to the person that possesses it. The most natural method for this purpose is to be conversant among the writings of the most polite authors. A man who has any relish for fine writing either discovers new beauties, or receives stronger impressions, from the masterly strokes of a great author, every time he peruses him; besides that he naturally wears himself into the same manner of speaking and thinking.

Conversation with men of a polite genius is another method for improving our natural taste. It is impossible for a man of the greatest parts to consider anything in its whole extent and in all its variety of lights. Every man, besides those general observations which are to be made upon an author, forms several reflections that are peculiar to his own manner of thinking; so that conversation will naturally furnish us with hints which we did not attend to, and make us enjoy other men's parts and reflections, as well as our own. This is the best reason I can give for the observation which several have made, that men of great genius in the same way of writing seldom rise up singly, but at certain periods of time appear together, and in a body; as they did at Rome in the reign of Augustus, and in Greece about the age of Socrates. I cannot think that Corneille, Racine, Molière, Boileau, La Fontaine, Bruyère, Bossuet, or the Daciers, would have written so well as they have done, had they not been friends and contemporaries.

It is likewise necessary for a man who would form to himself a finished taste of good writing, to be well versed in the works of the best critics, both ancient and modern. I must confess that I could wish there were authors of this kind, who, besides the mechanical rules, which a man of very little taste may discourse upon, would enter into the very spirit and soul of fine writing, and show us the several sources of that pleasure which rises in the mind upon the perusal of a noble work. Thus, although in poetry it be absolutely necessary that the unities of time, place, and action, should be thoroughly explained and understood, there is still something more essential to the art, something that elevates and astonishes the fancy, and gives a greatness of mind to the reader, which few of the critics besides Longinus have considered.

Our general taste in England is for epigram, turns of wit, and forced conceits, which have no manner of influence either for the bettering or enlarging the mind of him who reads them, and have been carefully avoided by the greatest writers, both among the ancients and moderns. I have endeavored, in several of my speculations, to banish this Gothic taste which has taken possession among us. I entertained the town for a week together with an essay upon wit, in which I endeavored to detect several of those false kinds which have been admired in the different ages of the world, and at the same time to show wherein the nature of true wit consists. I afterward gave an instance of the great force which lies in a natural simplicity of thought to affect the mind of the reader, from such vulgar pieces as have little else besides this single qualification to recommend them. I have likewise examined the works of the greatest poet which our nation, or perhaps any other, has produced, and particularized most of those rational and manly beauties which give a value to that divine work. I shall next Saturday enter upon an essay on "The Pleasures of the Imagination," which, though it shall consider that subject at large, will perhaps suggest to the reader what it is that gives a beauty to many passages of the finest writers both in prose and verse. As an undertaking of this nature is entirely new, I question not but it will be received with candor.

No. 419.<sup>1</sup> TUESDAY, JULY 1, 1712*Mentis gratissimus error.* — HOR.

There is a kind of writing wherein the poet quite loses sight of nature, and entertains his reader's imagination with the characters and actions of such persons as have, many of them, no existence but what he bestows on them. Such are fairies, witches, magicians, demons, and departed spirits. This Mr. Dryden calls "the fairy way of writing," which is indeed more difficult than any other that depends on the poet's fancy, because he has no pattern to follow in it, and must work altogether out of his own invention. .

There is a very odd turn of thought required for this sort of writing, and it is impossible for a poet to succeed in it who has not a particular cast of fancy, and an imagination naturally fruitful and superstitious. Besides this, he ought to be very well versed in legends and fables, antiquated romances, and the traditions of nurses and old women, that he may fall in with our natural prejudices, and humor those notions which we have imbibed in our infancy. For otherwise he will be apt to make his fairies talk like people of his own species, and not like other sets of beings, who converse with different objects and think in a different manner from that of mankind. . . . I do not say, with Mr. Bayes in *The Rehearsal*, that spirits must not be confined to speak sense, but it is certain their sense ought to be a little discolored, that it may seem particular, and proper to the person and condition of the speaker.

These descriptions raise a pleasing kind of horror in the mind of the reader, and amuse his imagination with the strangeness and novelty of the persons who are represented in them. They bring up into our memory the stories we have heard in our childhood, and favor those secret terrors and apprehensions to which the mind of man is naturally subject. We are pleased with surveying the different habits and behaviors of foreign countries; how much more must we be delighted and surprised when we are led, as it were, into a new creation, and see the persons and manners of another species! Men of cold fancies and philosophical dispositions object to this kind of poetry, that it has not probability enough to affect the imagi-

<sup>1</sup> The ninth of the eleven papers on "The Pleasures of the Imagination."



nation. But to this it may be answered that we are sure, in general, there are many intellectual beings in the world besides ourselves, and several species of spirits, who are subject to different laws and economies from those of mankind. When we see, therefore, any of these represented naturally, we cannot look upon the representation as altogether impossible; nay, many are prepossessed with such false opinions as dispose them to believe these particular delusions; at least we have all heard so many pleasing relations in favor of them, that we do not care for seeing through the falsehood, and willingly give ourselves up to so agreeable an imposture.

The ancients have not much of this poetry among them; for, indeed, almost the whole substance of it owes its original to the darkness and superstition of later ages, when pious frauds were made use of to amuse mankind, and frighten them into a sense of their duty. Our forefathers looked upon nature with more reverence and horror, before the world was enlightened by learning and philosophy, and loved to astonish themselves with the apprehensions of witchcraft, prodigies, charms, and enchantments. There was not a village in England that had not a ghost in it; the churchyards were all haunted; every large common had a circle of fairies belonging to it; and there was scarce a shepherd to be met with who had not seen a spirit.

Among all the poets of this kind our English are much the best, by what I have yet seen; whether it be that we abound with more stories of this nature, or that the genius of our country is fitter for this sort of poetry. For the English are naturally fanciful, and very often disposed, by that gloominess and melancholy of temper which is so frequent in our nation, to many wild notions and visions to which others are not so liable. Among the English, Shakespeare has incomparably excelled all others. That noble extravagance of fancy, which he had in so great perfection, thoroughly qualified him to touch this weak superstitious part of his reader's imagination, and made him capable of succeeding where he had nothing to support him besides the strength of his own genius. There is something so wild, and yet so solemn, in the speeches of his ghosts, fairies, witches, and the like imaginary persons, that we cannot forbear thinking them natural, though we have no rule by which to judge of them, and must confess, if there are such beings in

the world, it looks highly probable they should talk and act as he has represented them.

There is another sort of imaginary beings that we sometimes meet with among the poets, when the author represents any passion, appetite, virtue, or vice under a visible shape, and makes it a person or an actor in his poem. Of this nature are the descriptions of Hunger and Envy in Ovid, of Fame in Virgil, and of Sin and Death in Milton. We find a whole creation of the like shadowy persons in Spenser, who had an admirable talent in representations of this kind. I have discoursed of these emblematical persons in former papers, and shall therefore only mention them in this place.

Thus we see how many ways poetry addresses itself to the imagination, as it has not only the whole circle of nature for its province, but makes new worlds of its own, shows us persons who are not to be found in being, and represents even the faculties of the soul, with the several virtues and vices, in a sensible shape and character.

JOHN DENNIS  
ON THE GENIUS AND WRITINGS OF  
SHAKESPEARE

1712

[The following is from the first of three letters written by Dennis in February, 1711, in connection with a new version he had made of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* (called *The Invader of his Country*). The letters were published in 1712, under the title *An Essay on the Genius*, etc., together with two other letters attacking some of Addison's papers in the *Spectator*. The main theme of the letters on Shakespeare is his want of learning; to the modern student a matter of especial interest is Dennis's discussion of the doctrine of poetic justice. Addison attacked this doctrine in No. 40 of the *Spectator*; see the passage on p. 174 above.]

. . . SHAKESPEARE was one of the greatest geniuses that the world e'er saw for the tragic stage. Though he lay under greater disadvantages than any of his successors, yet had he greater and more genuine beauties than the best and greatest of them. And what makes the brightest glory of his character, those beauties were entirely his own, and owing to the force of his own nature; whereas his faults were owing to his education, and to the age that he lived in. One may say of him as they did of Homer, that he had none to imitate, and is himself inimitable. His imaginations were often as just as they were bold and strong. He had a natural discretion which never could have been taught him, and his judgment was strong and penetrating. He seems to have wanted nothing but time and leisure for thought, to have found out those rules of which he appears so ignorant. His characters are always drawn justly, exactly, graphically, except where he failed by not knowing history or the poetical art. He has for the most part more fairly distinguished them than any of his successors have done, who have falsified them or confounded them by making love the predominant quality in all. He had so fine a talent for touching the passions, and they are so lively in him, and so truly in nature, that they often touch us more without their due preparations than those of other tragic poets who have all



the beauty of design and all the advantage of incidents. His master passion was terror, which he has often moved so powerfully and so wonderfully that we may justly conclude that, if he had had the advantage of art and learning, he would have surpassed the very best and strongest of the ancients. His paintings are often so beautiful and so lively, so graceful and so powerful, especially where he uses them in order to move terror, that there is nothing perhaps more accomplished in our English poetry. His sentiments for the most part, in his best tragedies, are noble, generous, easy, and natural, and adapted to the persons who use them. His expression is in many places good and pure after a hundred years; simple though elevated, graceful though bold, and easy though strong. He seems to have been the very original of our English tragical harmony, — that is, the harmony of blank verse, diversified often by dissyllable and trisyllable terminations. For that diversity distinguishes it from heroic harmony, and, bringing it nearer to common use, makes it more proper to gain attention, and more fit for action and dialogue. Such verse we make when we are writing prose; we make such verse in common conversation.

If Shakespeare had these great qualities by nature, what would he not have been if he had joined to so happy a genius learning and the poetical art? For want of the latter, our author has sometimes made gross mistakes in the characters which he has drawn from history, against the equality and conveniency of manners of his dramatical persons. Witness Menenius in the following tragedy, whom he has made an errant buffoon, which is a great absurdity. For he might as well have imagined a grave majestic jack-pudding, as a buffoon in a Roman senator. Aufidius, the general of the Volscians, is shown a base and a profligate villain. He has offended against the equality of the manners even in his hero himself. For Coriolanus, who in the first part of the tragedy is shown so open, so frank, so violent, and so magnanimous, is represented in the latter part by Aufidius — which is contradicted by no one — a flattering, fawning, cringing, insinuating traitor.

For want of this poetical art, Shakespeare has introduced things into his tragedies which are against the dignity of that noble poem, as the rabble in *Julius Cæsar* and that in *Corio-*

*lanus*; though that in *Coriolanus* offends not only against the dignity of tragedy, but against the truth of history likewise, and the customs of ancient Rome, and the majesty of the Roman people, as we shall have occasion to show anon.

For want of this art, he has made his incidents less moving, less surprising, and less wonderful. He has been so far from seeking those fine occasions to move with which an action furnished according to art would have furnished him, that he seems rather to have industriously avoided them. He makes *Coriolanus*, upon his sentence of banishment, take his leave of his wife and his mother out of sight of the audience, and so has purposely, as it were, avoided a great occasion to move.

If we are willing to allow that Shakespeare, by sticking to the bare events of history, has moved more than any of his successors, yet his just admirers must confess that if he had had the poetical art he would have moved ten times more. For 't is impossible that by a bare historical play he could move so much as he would have done by a fable.

We find that a romance entertains the generality of mankind with more satisfaction than history, if they read only to be entertained; but if they read history through pride or ambition, they bring their passions along with them, and that alters the case. Nothing is more plain than that even in an historical relation some parts of it, and some events, please more than others. And therefore a man of judgment, who sees why they do so, may, in forming a fable and disposing an action, please more than an historian can do. For the just fiction of a fable moves us more than an historical relation can do, for the two following reasons. First, by reason of the communication and mutual dependence of its parts. For if passion springs from motion, then the obstruction of that motion or a counter motion must obstruct and check the passion; and therefore an historian, and a writer of historical plays, passing from events of one nature to events of another nature without a due preparation, must of necessity stifle and confound one passion by another. The second reason why the fiction of a fable pleases us more than an historical relation can do, is, because in an historical relation we seldom are acquainted with the true causes of events, whereas in a feigned action which is duly constituted — that is, which has a just beginning —

those causes always appear. For 't is observable that, both in a poetical fiction and an historical relation, those events are the most entertaining, the most surprising, and the most wonderful, in which Providence most plainly appears. And 'tis for this reason that the author of a just fable must please more than the writer of an historical relation. The good must never fail to prosper, and the bad must always be punished; otherwise the incidents, and particularly the catastrophe which is the grand incident, are liable to be imputed rather to chance than to almighty conduct and to sovereign justice. The want of this impartial distribution of justice makes the *Coriolanus* of Shakespeare to be without moral. 'T is true, indeed, Coriolanus is killed by those foreign enemies with whom he had openly sided against his country, which seems to be an event worthy of Providence, and would look as if it were contrived by infinite wisdom, and executed by supreme justice, to make Coriolanus a dreadful example to all who lead on foreign enemies to the invasion of their native country, if there were not something in the fate of the other characters which gives occasion to doubt of it, and which suggests to the skeptical reader that this might happen by accident. For Aufidius, the principal murderer of Coriolanus, who in cold blood gets him assassinated by ruffians, instead of leaving him to the law of the country and the justice of the Volscian senate, and who commits so black a crime not by any erroneous zeal or a mistaken public spirit, but through jealousy, envy, and inveterate malice, — this assassinator not only survives, and survives unpunished, but seems to be rewarded for so detestable an action by engrossing all those honors to himself which Coriolanus before had shared with him. . . .

But indeed Shakespeare has been wanting in the exact distribution of poetical justice not only in his *Coriolanus*, but in most of his best tragedies, in which the guilty and the innocent perish promiscuously; as Duncan and Banquo in *Macbeth*, as likewise Lady Macduff and her children; Desdemona in *Othello*; Cordelia, Kent, and King Lear, in the tragedy that bears his name; Brutus and Portia in *Julius Cæsar*; and young Hamlet in the tragedy of *Hamlet*. For though it may be said in defense of the last, that Hamlet had a design to kill his uncle who then reigned, yet this is justified by no less than a call



from heaven, and raising up one from the dead to urge him to it. The good and the bad, then, perishing promiscuously in the best of Shakespeare's tragedies, there can be either none or very weak instruction in them; for such promiscuous events call the government of Providence into question, and by skeptics and libertines are resolved into chance. I humbly conceive, therefore, that this want of dramatical justice in the tragedy of *Coriolanus* gave occasion for a just alteration, and that I was obliged to sacrifice to that justice Aufidius and the tribunes, as well as Coriolanus.

Thus have we endeavored to show that, for want of the poetical art, Shakespeare lay under very great disadvantages. At the same time we must own to his honor that he has often performed wonders without it, in spite of the judgment of so great a man as Horace:—

*Natura fieret laudabile carmen, an arte,  
Quæsitum est: ego nec studium sine divite vena,  
Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium; alterius sic  
Altera pascit opem res, et conjurat amice.<sup>1</sup>*

But from this very judgment of Horace we may justly conclude that Shakespeare would have wonderfully surpassed himself, if art had been joined to nature. . . .

## REMARKS UPON CATO

1713

[The pamphlet from which the following extract is taken is one of several connected with a prolonged quarrel involving Addison, Dennis, and others, which began in 1711. Addison's *Cato* was produced in April, 1713 (see the account given by Colley Cibber, page 271 below). It was characterized in particular by the unusual effort to carry out the old rule of "unity of place"; and Dennis seized upon the resulting improbabilities as an opportunity to vent his rage, both personal and critical, upon the dramatist. The passages here reproduced are also quoted, with comments, in Dr. Johnson's *Life of Addison*.]

. . . UPON the departure of Portius, Sempronius makes but one soliloquy, and immediately in comes Syphax, and then the

<sup>1</sup> "Inquiry has been made whether the praiseworthy poem is the product of nature or art; for my part, I do not see what advantage there is either in unpolished talent or in study without a rich natural vein, — so the one demands the aid of the other, and enters into friendly conspiracy with it."

two politicians are at it immediately. They lay their heads together, with their snuff-boxes in their hands, as Mr. Bayes has it, and feague it away. But, in the midst of that wise scene, Syphax seems to give a seasonable caution to Sempronius:—

But is it true, Sempronius, that your senate  
Is called together? Gods! thou must be cautious;  
Cato has piercing eyes.

There is a great deal of caution shown indeed, in meeting in a governor's own hall to carry on their plot against him. Whatever opinion they have of his eyes, I suppose they have none of his ears, or they would never have talked at this foolish rate so near.

Gods! thou must be cautious!

Oh yes! very cautious; for if Cato should overhear you, and turn you off for politicians, Cæsar would never take you; no, Cæsar would never take you.

When Cato (Act II) turns the senators out of the hall, upon pretence of acquainting Juba with the result of their debates, he appears to me to do a thing which is neither reasonable nor civil. Juba might certainly have better been made acquainted with the result of that debate in some private apartment of the place. But the poet was driven upon this absurdity to make way for another; and that is, to give Juba an opportunity to demand Marcia of her father. But the quarrel and rage of Juba and Syphax, in the same act; the invectives of Syphax against the Romans and Cato; the advice that he gives Juba, in her father's hall, to bear away Marcia by force; and his brutal and clamorous rage upon his refusal, and at a time when Cato was scarcely out of sight, and perhaps not out of hearing, — at least some of his guards or domestics must necessarily be supposed to be within hearing, — is a thing that is so far from being probable that it is hardly possible.

Sempronius, in the second act, comes back once more in the same morning to the governor's hall, to carry on the conspiracy with Syphax against the governor, his country, and his family; which is so stupid that it is below the wisdom of the O——'s, the Mac's, and the Teague's; even Eustace Commins himself would never have gone to Justice Hall, to have

conspired against the government. If officers at Portsmouth should lay their heads together, in order to the carrying off J—— G——'s<sup>1</sup> niece or daughter, would they meet in J—— G——'s hall to carry on that conspiracy? There would be no necessity for their meeting there, at least till they came to the execution of their plot, because there would be other places to meet in. There would be no probability that they should meet there, because there would be places more private and more commodious. Now there ought to be nothing in a tragical action but what is necessary or probable.

But treason is not the only thing that is carried on in this hall. That, and love, and philosophy take their turns in it, without any manner of necessity or probability occasioned by the action, as duly and regularly, without interrupting one another, as if there were a triple league between them, and a mutual agreement that each should give place to and make way for the other, in a due and orderly succession.

We now come to the third act. Sempronius, in this act, comes into the governor's hall, with the leaders of the mutiny; but, as soon as Cato is gone, Sempronius, who but just before had acted like an unparalleled knave, discovers himself, like an egregious fool, to be an accomplice in the conspiracy.

Know, villains, when such paltry slaves presume  
To mix in treason, if the plot succeeds,  
They're thrown neglected by; but, if it fails,  
They're sure to die like dogs, as you shall do.  
Here, take these factious monsters, drag them forth  
To sudden death.

'Tis true, indeed, the second leader says, there are none there but friends; but is that possible at such a juncture? Can a parcel of rogues attempt to assassinate the governor of a town of war, in his own house, in mid-day? and, after they are discovered and defeated, can there be none near them but friends? Is it not plain from these words of Sempronius, —

Here, take these factious monsters, drag them forth  
To sudden death, —

and from the entrance of the guards upon the word of command, that those guards were within earshot? Behold Sem-

<sup>1</sup> That is, Sir John Gibson, Lieutenant Governor of Portsmouth.



pronius then palpably discovered. How comes it to pass, then, that instead of being hanged up with the rest, he remains secure in the governor's hall, and there carries on his conspiracy against the government, the third time in the same day, with his old comrade Syphax, who enters at the same time that the guards are carrying away the leaders, big with the news of the defeat of Sempronius?—though where he had his intelligence so soon is difficult to imagine. . . .

But now let us lay before the reader that part of the scenery of the fourth act which may show the absurdities which the author has run into through the indiscreet observance of the unity of place. I do not remember that Aristotle has said anything expressly concerning the unity of place. 'Tis true, implicitly he has said enough in the rules which he has laid down for the chorus. For, by making the chorus an essential part of tragedy, and by bringing it on the stage immediately after the opening of the scene, and retaining it till the very catastrophe, he has so determined and fixed the place of action that it was impossible for an author on the Grecian stage to break through that unity. I am of opinion that if a modern tragic poet can preserve the unity of place without destroying the probability of the incidents, 'tis always best for him to do it; because, by the preserving of that unity, as we have taken notice above, he adds grace and clearness and comeliness to the representation. But since there are no express rules about it, and we are under no compulsion to keep it, since we have no chorus as the Grecian poet had, if it cannot be preserved without rendering the greater part of the incidents unreasonable and absurd, and perhaps sometimes monstrous, 'tis certainly better to break it. . . .

But now let us sum up all these absurdities together. Sempronius goes at noonday, in Juba's clothes and with Juba's guards, to Cato's palace, in order to pass for Juba, in a place where they were both so very well known; he meets Juba there, and resolves to murder him with his own guards. Upon the guards appearing a little bashful, he threatens them:—

Hah! Dastards, do you tremble!  
Or act like men, or, by yon azure heaven —

But the guards still remaining restive, Sempronius himself attacks Juba, while each of the guards is representing Mr.

Spectator's sign of the Gaper, awed, it seems, and terrified by Sempronius's threats. Juba kills Sempronius, and takes his own army prisoners, and carries them in triumph away to Cato. Now I would fain know if any part of Mr. Bayes's tragedy<sup>1</sup> is so full of absurdity as this?

Upon hearing the clash of swords, Lucia and Marcia come in. The question is, why no men come in upon hearing the noise of swords in the governor's hall? Where was the governor himself? Where were his guards? Where were his servants? Such an attempt as this, so near the person of a governor of a place of war, was enough to alarm the whole garrison; and yet, for almost half an hour after Sempronius was killed, we find none of those appear who were the likeliest in the world to be alarmed; and the noise of swords is made to draw only two poor women thither, who were most certain to run away from it. Upon Lucia and Marcia's coming in, Lucia appears in all the symptoms of an hysterical gentlewoman:—

Sure 't was the clash of swords! my troubled heart  
Is so cast down, and sunk amidst its sorrows,  
It throbs with fear, and aches at every sound!

And immediately her old whimsy returns upon her:—

O Marcia, should thy brothers, for my sake —  
I die away with horror at the thought.

She fancies that there can be no cutting of throats but it must be for her. If this is tragical, I would fain know what is comical. Well! upon this they spy the body of Sempronius; and Marcia, deluded by the habit, it seems, takes him for Juba; for says she, —

The face is muffled up within the garment.

Now, how a man could fight and fall with his face muffled up in his garment is, I think, a little hard to conceive. Besides, Juba, before he killed him, knew this to be Sempronius. It was not by his garment that he knew this; it was by his face then: his face therefore was not muffled. Upon seeing this man with his muffled face, Marcia falls a-raving; and, owning her passion for the supposed defunct, begins to make his funeral oration. Upon which Juba enters listening, — I suppose on tiptoe; for I cannot imagine how any one can enter listening in any other posture.

<sup>1</sup> Described in *The Rehearsal* (a burlesque of Dryden's *Conquest of Granada*).

I would fain know how it comes to pass that during all this time he had sent nobody, no, not so much as a candle-snuffer, to take away the dead body of Sempronius. Well! but let us regard him listening. Having left his apprehension behind him, he at first applies what Marcia says to Sempronius. But finding at last, with much ado, that he himself is the happy man, he quits his eavesdropping, and discovers himself just time enough to prevent his being cuckolded by a dead man, of whom the moment before he had appeared so jealous, and greedily intercepts the bliss which was fondly designed for one who could not be the better for it. But here I must ask a question: how comes Juba to listen here, who had not listened before throughout the play? Or how comes he to be the only person of this tragedy who listens, when love and treason were so often talked in so public a place as a hall? I am afraid the author was driven upon all these absurdities only to introduce this miserable mistake of Marcia, which, after all, is much below the dignity of tragedy, as anything is which is the effect or result of trick.

But let us come to the scenery of the fifth act. Cato appears first upon the scene, sitting in a thoughtful posture, in his hand Plato's treatise on the Immortality of the Soul, a drawn sword on the table by him. Now let us consider the place in which this sight is presented to us. The place, forsooth, is a long hall. Let us suppose that any one should place himself in this posture in the midst of one of our halls in London; that he should appear *solus* in a sullen posture, a drawn sword on the table by him; in his hand Plato's treatise on the Immortality of the Soul, translated lately by Bernard Lintot: I desire the reader to consider whether such a person as this would pass with them who beheld him for a great patriot, a great philosopher, or a general, or some whimsical person who fancied himself all these? and whether the people who belonged to the family would think that such a person had a design upon their midribs or his own?

In short, that Cato should sit long enough in the aforesaid posture, in the midst of this large hall, to read over Plato's treatise on the Immortality of the Soul, which is a lecture of two long hours; that he should propose to himself to be private there upon that occasion; that he should be angry with his son for intruding there; then, that he should leave this hall upon



the pretence of sleep, give himself the mortal wound in his bed-chamber, and then be brought back into that hall to expire, purely to show his good breeding and save his friends the trouble of coming up to his bed-chamber, — all this appears to me to be improbable, incredible, impossible. . . .

# ANTHONY ASHLEY COOPER, THIRD EARL OF SHAFTESBURY

## CHARACTERISTICS OF MEN, MANNERS, OPINIONS AND TIMES

1711

[The above is the title of the collected essays of Lord Shaftesbury. Most of them had been earlier published: the "Freedom of Wit and Humor" in 1709 (as *Sensus Communis: an Essay on the Freedom*, etc.), "Advice to an Author" in 1710 (as *Soliloquy: or Advice*, etc.). The extracts here given are from Part III, Section IV, of the "Freedom of Wit and Humor," and Part III, Section III, of "Advice to an Author." With Shaftesbury's doctrine of an absolute standard of worth, in both character and art, should be compared the opposing views of Mandeville; see pp. 251-254, below.]

### AN ESSAY ON THE FREEDOM OF WIT AND HUMOR

'T is well for you, my friend, that in your education you have had little to do with the philosophy or philosophers of our days. A good poet and an honest historian may afford learning enough for a gentleman; and such a one, whilst he reads these authors as his diversion, will have a truer relish of their sense and understand them better than a pedant with all his labors and the assistance of his volumes of commentators. I am sensible that of old 't was the custom to send the youth of highest quality to philosophers to be formed. 'T was in their schools, in their company, and by their precepts and example, that the illustrious pupils were inured to hardship and exercised in the severest courses of temperance and self-denial. By such an early discipline they were fitted for the command of others; to maintain their country's honor in war, rule wisely in the state, and fight against luxury and corruption in times of prosperity and peace. If any of these arts are comprehended in university learning, 't is well. But as some universities in the world are now modeled, they seem not so very effectual to these purposes, nor so fortunate in preparing for a right practice of the world, or a just knowledge of men and things. Had you been thorough-paced in the ethics or politics of the schools, I should never have

thought of writing a word to you upon your common sense or the love of mankind. I should not have cited the poet's *dulce et decorum*; nor, if I had made a character for you, as he for his noble friend, should I have crowned it with his —

*Non ille pro caris amicis  
Aut patria timidus perire.*<sup>1</sup>

Our philosophy nowadays runs after the manner of that able sophister who said, "Skin for skin: all that a man hath will he give for his life." 'Tis orthodox divinity, as well as sound philosophy, with some men to rate life by the number and exquisiteness of the pleasing sensations. These they constantly set in opposition to dry virtue and honesty; and upon this foot they think it proper to call all men fools who would hazard a life, or part with any of these pleasing sensations, except on the condition of being repaid in the same coin and with good interest into the bargain. Thus, it seems, we are to learn virtue by usury, and enhance the value of life, and of the pleasures of sense, in order to be wise and to live well.

But you, my friend, are stubborn in this point; and instead of being brought to think mournfully of death, or to repine at the loss of what you may sometimes hazard by your honesty, you can laugh at such maxims as these, and divert yourself with the improved selfishness and philosophical cowardice of these fashionable moralists. You will not be taught to value life at their rate, or degrade honesty as they do, who make it only a name. You are persuaded there is something more in the thing than fashion or applause; that worth and merit are substantial, and no way variable by fancy or will; and that honor is as much itself when acting by itself and unseen, as when seen and applauded by all the world.

Should one who had the countenance of a gentleman ask me "why I would avoid being nasty, when nobody was present?" in the first place I should be fully satisfied that he himself was a very nasty gentleman who could ask this question, and that it would be a hard matter for me to make him ever conceive what true cleanliness was. However, I might, notwithstanding this, be contented to give him a slight answer, and say "'twas because I had a nose." Should he trouble me further and ask again, "what if I had a cold? or what if naturally I had no such

<sup>1</sup> "He is not afraid to die for his dear friends or his country."



“nice smell?” I might answer perhaps “that I cared as little to see myself nasty as that others should see me in that condition.” But what if it were in the dark? Why even then, though I had neither nose nor eyes, my sense of the matter would still be the same: my nature would rise at the thought of what was sordid; or if it did not, I should have a wretched nature indeed, and hate myself for a beast. Honor myself I never could, whilst I had no better a sense of what in reality I owed myself, and what became me as a human creature.

Much in the same manner have I heard it asked, Why should a man be honest in the dark? What a man must be to ask this question I will not say. But for those who have no better a reason for being honest than the fear of a gibbet or a jail, I should not, I confess, much covet their company or acquaintance. And if any guardian of mine who had kept his trust, and given me back my estate when I came of age, had been discovered to have acted thus through fear only of what might happen to him, I should for my own part undoubtedly continue civil and respectful to him; but for my opinion of his worth, it would be such as the Pythian god had of his votary, who devoutly feared him, and therefore restored to a friend what had been deposited in his hands: —

*Reddidit ergo metu, non moribus; et tamen omnem  
Vocem adyti dignam templo, veramque probavit,  
Extinctus tota pariter cum prole domoque.<sup>1</sup>*

I know very well that many services to the public are done merely for the sake of a gratuity; and that informers in particular are to be taken care of, and sometimes made pensioners of state. But I must beg pardon for the particular thoughts I may have of these gentlemen’s merit, and shall never bestow my esteem on any other than the voluntary discoverers of villainy and hearty prosecutors of their country’s interest. And in this respect, I know nothing greater or nobler than the undertaking and managing some important accusation, by which some high criminal of state, or some formed body of conspirators against the public, may be arraigned and brought to punishment, through the honest zeal and public affection of a private man.

<sup>1</sup> “He made restitution, therefore, through fear, not morality; and yet proved the whole oracle as worthy of the temple and true, being destroyed completely, together with his children and house.”

I know, too, that the mere vulgar of mankind often stand in need of such a rectifying object as the gallows before their eyes. Yet I have no belief that any man of a liberal education, or common honesty, ever needed to have recourse to this idea in his mind, the better to restrain him from playing the knave. And if a saint had no other virtue than what was raised in him by the same objects of reward and punishment, in a more distant state, I know not whose love or esteem he might gain besides, but for my own part I should never think him worthy of mine. . . .

## ADVICE TO AN AUTHOR

. . . However difficult or desperate it may appear in any artist to endeavor to bring perfection into his work, if he has not at least the idea of perfection to give him aim, he will be found very defective and mean in performance. Though his intention be to please the world, he must nevertheless be, in a manner, above it, and fix his eye upon that consummate grace, that beauty of nature, and that perfection of numbers, which the rest of mankind, feeling only by the effect whilst ignorant of the cause, term the *je ne sais quoi*, the unintelligible or the *I know not what*, and suppose to be a kind of charm of enchantment, of which the artist himself can give no account.

But here I find I am tempted to do what I have myself condemned. Hardly can I forbear making some apology for my frequent recourse to the rules of common artists, to the masters of exercise, to the academies of painters, statuary, and to the rest of the *virtuoso* tribe. But in this I am so fully satisfied I have reason on my side, that, let custom be ever so strong against me, I had rather repair to these inferior schools to search for truth and nature, than to some other places where higher arts and sciences are professed.

I am persuaded that to be a *virtuoso* (so far as befits a gentleman) is a higher step towards the becoming a man of virtue and good sense, than the being what in this age we call a scholar. For even rude nature itself, in its primitive simplicity, is a better guide to judgment than improved sophistry and pedantic learning. The *faciuntne intellegendo, ut nihil intellegant*<sup>1</sup> will be ever applied by men of discernment and free thought to such

<sup>1</sup> "Do they not bring it about by their knowingness that they know nothing at all?" (Terence.)

logic, such principles, such forms and rudiments of knowledge, as are established in certain schools of literature and science. The case is sufficiently understood even by those who are unwilling to confess the truth of it. Effects betray their causes. And the known turn and figure of those understandings which sprout from nurseries of this kind, give a plain idea of what is judged on this occasion. 'Tis no wonder if, after so wrong a ground of education, there appears to be such need of redress and amendment from that excellent school which we call the world. The mere amusements of gentlemen are found more improving than the profound researches of pedants; and in the management of our youth we are forced to have recourse to the former, as an antidote against the genius peculiar to the latter. If the formalists of this world were erected into patentees with a sole commission of authorship, we should undoubtedly see such writing in our days as would either wholly wean us from all books in general, or at least from all such as were the product of our own nation under such a subordinate and conforming government.

However this may prove, there can be no kind of writing which relates to men and manners where it is not necessary for the author to understand poetical and moral truth, the beauty of sentiments, the sublime of characters, and carry in his eye the model or exemplar of that natural grace which gives to every action its attractive charm. If he has naturally no eye or ear for these interior numbers, 'tis not likely he should be able to judge better of that exterior proportion and symmetry of composition which constitutes a legitimate piece.

Could we once convince ourselves of what is in itself so evident, that in the very nature of things there must of necessity be the foundation of a right and wrong taste, as well in respect of inward characters and features as of outward person, behavior, and action, we should be far more ashamed of ignorance and wrong judgment in the former than in the latter of these subjects. Even in the arts, which are mere imitations of that outward grace and beauty, we not only confess a taste, but make it a part of refined breeding to discover amidst the many false manners and ill styles the true and natural one, which represents the real beauty and Venus of the kind. 'Tis the like moral grace and Venus which, discovering itself in the turns of charac-



ter and the variety of human affection, is copied by the writing artist. If he knows not this Venus, these graces, nor was ever struck with the beauty, the decorum of this inward kind, he can neither paint advantageously after the life nor in a feigned subject where he has full scope. For never can he, on these terms, represent merit and virtue, or mark deformity and blemish. Never can he with justice and true proportion assign the boundaries of either part, or separate the distant characters. The schemes must be defective, and the draughts confused, where the standard is weakly established and the measure out of use. Such a designer, who has so little feeling of these proportions, so little consciousness of this excellence or these perfections, will never be found able to describe a perfect character; or, what is more according to art, express the effect and force of this perfection from the result of various and mixed characters of life.

And thus the sense of inward numbers, the knowledge and practice of the social virtues, and the familiarity and favor of the moral graces, are essential to the character of a deserving artist and just favorite of the Muses. Thus are the Arts and Virtues mutually friends; and thus the science of virtuosi and that of virtue itself become, in a manner, one and the same.

One who aspires to the character of a man of breeding and politeness is careful to form his judgment of arts and sciences upon right models of perfection. If he travels to Rome, he inquires which are the truest pieces of architecture, the best remains of statues, the best paintings of a Raphael or a Caraccio. However antiquated, rough, or dismal they may appear to him at first sight, he resolves to view them over and over, till he has brought himself to relish them, and finds their hidden graces and perfections. He takes particular care to turn his eye from everything which is gaudy, luscious, and of a false taste. Nor is he less careful to turn his ear from every sort of music besides that which is of the best manner and truest harmony.

'Twere to be wished we had the same regard to a right taste in life and manners. What mortal being, once convinced of a difference in inward character, and of a preference due to one kind above another, would not be concerned to make his own the best? If civility and humanity be a taste; if brutality, insolence, riot, be in the same manner a taste, who, if he could reflect, would not choose to form himself on the amiable and

agreeable rather than the odious and perverse model? Who would not endeavor to force nature as well in this respect as in what relates to a taste or judgment in other arts and sciences? For in each place the force on nature is used only for its redress. If a natural good taste be not already formed in us, why should not we endeavor to form it, and cultivate it till it become natural?

"I like! I fancy! I admire! How? By accident, or as I please? No. But I learn to fancy, to admire, to please, as the subjects themselves are deserving, and can bear me out. Otherwise I like at this hour but dislike the next. I shall be weary of my pursuit, and, upon experience, find little pleasure in the main, if my choice and judgment in it be from no other rule than that single one, because I please. Grotesque and monstrous figures often please. Cruel spectacles and barbarities are also found to please, and, in some tempers, to please beyond all other subjects. But is this pleasure right? And shall I follow it if it presents? not strive with it, or endeavor to prevent its growth or prevalency in my temper? How stands the case in a more soft and flattering kind of pleasure? Effeminacy pleases me. The Indian figures, the Japan work, the enamel strikes my eye. The luscious colors and glossy paint gain upon my fancy. A French or Flemish style is highly liked by me at first sight, and I pursue my liking. But what ensues? Do I not forever forfeit my good relish? How is it possible I should thus come to taste the beauties of an Italian master, or of a hand happily formed on nature and the ancients? 'Tis not by wantonness and humor that I shall attain my end and arrive at the enjoyment I propose. The art itself is severe, the rules rigid. And if I expect the knowledge should come to me by accident, or in play, I shall be grossly deluded, and prove myself, at best, a mock-virtuoso or mere pedant of the kind."

Here therefore we have once again exhibited our moral science in the same method and manner of soliloquy as above. To this correction of humor and formation of a taste, our reading, if it be of the right sort, must principally contribute. Whatever company we keep, or however polite and agreeable their characters may be with whom we converse or correspond, if the authors we read are of another kind, we shall find our palate strangely turned their way. We are the unhappier in this respect for being scholars, if our studies be ill chosen. Nor can I,

for this reason, think it proper to call a man well-read who reads many authors, since he must of necessity have more ill models than good, and be more stuffed with bombast, ill fancy, and wry thought, than filled with solid sense and just imagination. . . .

One would imagine that our philosophical writers, who pretend to treat of morals, should far out-do mere poets in recommending virtue, and representing what was fair and amiable in human actions. One would imagine that, if they turned their eye towards remote countries (of which they affect so much to speak), they should search for that simplicity of manners and innocence of behavior which has been often known among mere savages, ere they were corrupted by our commerce, and, by sad example, instructed in all kinds of treachery and inhumanity. 'T would be of advantage to us to hear the causes of this strange corruption in ourselves, and be made to consider of our deviation from nature, and from that just purity of manners which might be expected, especially from a people so assisted and enlightened by religion. For who would not naturally expect more justice, fidelity, temperance, and honesty from Christians than from Mahometans or mere pagans? But so far are our modern moralists from condemning any unnatural vices or corrupt manners, whether in our own or foreign climates, that they would have vice itself appear as natural as virtue, and from the worst examples would represent to us that all actions are naturally indifferent; that they have no note or character of good or ill in themselves, but are distinguished by mere fashion, law or arbitrary decree. Wonderful philosophy! raised from the dregs of an illiterate, mean kind, which was ever despised among the great ancients, and rejected by all men of action or sound erudition, but in these ages imperfectly copied from the original, and, with much disadvantage, imitated and assumed in common both by devout and indevout attempters in the moral kind.

Should a writer upon music, addressing himself to the students and lovers of the art, declare to them that the measure or rule of harmony was caprice or will, humor or fashion, 't is not very likely he should be heard with great attention or treated with real gravity. For harmony is harmony by nature, let men judge ever so ridiculously of music. So is symmetry and proportion founded still in nature, let men's fancy prove ever so barbarous, or their fashions ever so Gothic, in their architec-



ture, sculpture, or whatever other designing art. 'Tis the same case where life and manners are concerned. Virtue has the same fixed standard. The same numbers, harmony, and proportion will have place in morals, and are discoverable in the characters and affections of mankind; in which are laid the just foundations of an art and science superior to every other of human practice and comprehension. . . .

## GEORGE BERKELEY

### DIALOGUES BETWEEN HYLAS AND PHILONOUS

1713

[Berkeley is the only English philosopher of the eighteenth century whose style makes him a figure of importance in literature. In 1710 he had published his *Principles of Human Knowledge*, setting forth his theory that the universe is purely spiritual, and that the existence of material substance is an unnecessary assumption. It had been much misunderstood, and to answer the arguments of his opponents he made use of the form of the Platonic dialogue in the work here represented. In Hylas (connected with Greek ὕλη, matter) he personifies the belief in material substance; in Philonous ("lover of mind") his own doctrine. The extracts are chiefly from the first dialogue, with a short passage from the second and another from the conclusion of the third.]

. . . *Hylas*. You were represented in last night's conversation as one who maintained the most extravagant opinion that ever entered into the mind of man, to wit, that there is no such thing as *material substance* in the world.

*Philonous*. That there is no such thing as what philosophers call material substance, I am seriously persuaded; but if I were made to see anything absurd or skeptical in this, I should then have the same reason to renounce this that I imagine I have now to reject the contrary opinion.

*Hylas*. What! Can anything be more fantastical, more repugnant to common sense, or a more manifest piece of skepticism, than to believe there is no such thing as *matter*?

*Philonous*. Softly, good Hylas. What if it should prove that you, who hold there is, are by virtue of that opinion a greater skeptic, and maintain more paradoxes and repugnances to common sense, than I who believe no such thing?

*Hylas*. You may as soon persuade me the part is greater than the whole as that, in order to avoid absurdity and skepticism, I should ever be obliged to give up my opinion in this point.

*Philonous*. Well, then, are you content to admit that opinion for true which, upon examination, shall appear most agreeable to common sense, and remote from skepticism?

*Hylas.* With all my heart. Since you are for raising disputes about the plainest things in nature, I am content for once to hear what you have to say.

*Philonous.* Pray, Hylas, what do you mean by a skeptic?

*Hylas.* I mean what all men mean, — one that doubts of everything.

*Philonous.* He, then, who entertains no doubt concerning some particular point, with regard to that point cannot be thought a skeptic.

*Hylas.* I agree with you.

*Philonous.* Whether doth doubting consist in embracing the affirmative or negative side of a question?

*Hylas.* In neither; for whoever understands English cannot but know that *doubting* signifies a suspense between both.

*Philonous.* He, then, that denies any point can no more be said to doubt of it, than he who affirmeth it with the same degree of assurance.

*Hylas.* True.

*Philonous.* And, consequently, for such his denial is no more to be esteemed a skeptic than the other.

*Hylas.* I acknowledge it.

*Philonous.* How cometh it to pass, then, Hylas, that you pronounce me a skeptic because I deny what you affirm, to wit, the existence of matter? Since, for aught you can tell, I am as peremptory in my denial as you in your affirmation.

*Hylas.* Hold, Philonous, — I have been a little out in my definition; but every false step a man makes in discourse is not to be insisted on. I said, indeed, that a skeptic was one who doubted of everything; but I should have added, or who denies the reality and truth of things.

*Philonous.* What things? Do you mean the principles and theorems of sciences? But these you know are universal intellectual notions, and consequently independent of matter; the denial therefore of this doth not imply the denying them.

*Hylas.* I grant it. But are there no other things? What think you of distrusting the senses, of denying the real existence of sensible things, or pretending to know nothing of them? Is not this sufficient to denominate a man a skeptic?

*Philonous.* Shall we therefore examine which of us it is that denies the reality of sensible things, or professes the greatest



ignorance of them? — since, if I take you rightly, he is to be esteemed the greatest skeptic?

*Hylas.* That is what I desire.

*Philonous.* What mean you by sensible things?

*Hylas.* Those things which are perceived by the senses. Can you imagine that I mean anything else?

*Philonous.* Pardon me, Hylas, if I am desirous clearly to apprehend your notions, since this may much shorten our inquiry. Suffer me then to ask you this farther question. Are those things only perceived by the senses which are perceived immediately? Or, may those things properly be said to be sensible which are perceived mediately, or not without the intervention of others?

*Hylas.* I do not sufficiently understand you.

*Philonous.* In reading a book, what I immediately perceive are the letters, but mediately, or by means of these, are suggested to my mind the notions of God, virtue, truth, etc. Now, that the letters are truly sensible things, or perceived by sense, there is no doubt; but I would know whether you take the things suggested by them to be so too.

*Hylas.* No, certainly; it were absurd to think *God* or *virtue* sensible things, though they may be signified and suggested to the mind by sensible marks, with which they have an arbitrary connection.

*Philonous.* It seems, then, that by sensible things you mean those only which can be perceived *immediately* by sense?

*Hylas.* Right.

*Philonous.* Doth it not follow from this that, though I see one part of the sky red, and another blue, and that my reason doth thence evidently conclude there must be some cause of that diversity of colors, yet that cause cannot be said to be a sensible thing, or perceived by the sense of seeing?

*Hylas.* It doth.

*Philonous.* In like manner, though I hear variety of sounds, yet I cannot be said to hear the causes of those sounds?

*Hylas.* You cannot.

*Philonous.* And when by my touch I perceive a thing to be hot and heavy, I cannot say, with any truth or propriety, that I feel the cause of its heat or weight?

*Hylas.* To prevent any more questions of this kind, I tell you

once for all that by sensible things I mean those only which are perceived by sense, and that in truth the senses perceive nothing which they do not perceive immediately; for they make no inferences. The deducing, therefore, of causes or occasions from effects or appearances, which alone are perceived by sense, entirely relates to reason.

*Philonous.* This point, then, is agreed between us, — that sensible things are those only which are immediately perceived by sense. You will farther inform me whether we immediately perceive by sight anything beside light, and colors, and figures; or by hearing anything but sounds; by the palate, anything beside tastes; by the smell, beside odors; or by the touch, more than tangible qualities.

*Hylas.* We do not.

*Philonous.* It seems, therefore, that if you take away all sensible qualities, there remains nothing sensible?

*Hylas.* I grant it.

*Philonous.* Sensible things, therefore, are nothing else but so many sensible qualities, or combinations of sensible qualities?

*Hylas.* Nothing else.

*Philonous.* Heat, then, is a sensible thing?

*Hylas.* Certainly.

*Philonous.* Doth the reality of sensible things consist in being perceived? or is it something distinct from their being perceived, and that bears no relation to the mind?

*Hylas.* To exist is one thing, and to be perceived another.

*Philonous.* I speak with regard to sensible things only; and of these I ask, whether by their real existence you mean a subsistence exterior to the mind, and distinct from their being perceived?

*Hylas.* I mean a real absolute being, distinct from, and without any relation to, their being perceived.

*Philonous.* Heat, therefore, if it be allowed a real being, must exist without the mind?

*Hylas.* It must.

*Philonous.* Tell me, Hylas, is this real existence equally compatible to all degrees of heat which we perceive, or is there any reason why we should attribute it to some, and deny it of others? And if there be, pray let me know that reason.

*Hylas.* Whatever degree of heat we perceive by sense, we may be sure the same exists in the object that occasions it.

*Philonous.* What! the greatest as well as the least?

*Hylas.* I tell you, the reason is plainly the same in respect of both; they are both perceived by sense. Nay, the greater degree of heat is more sensibly perceived; and consequently, if there is any difference, we are more certain of its real existence than we can be of the reality of a lesser degree.

*Philonous.* But is not the most vehement and intense degree of heat a very great pain?

*Hylas.* No one can deny it.

*Philonous.* And is any unperceiving thing capable of pain or pleasure?

*Hylas.* No, certainly.

*Philonous.* Is your material substance a senseless being, or a being endowed with sense and perception?

*Hylas.* It is senseless, without doubt.

*Philonous.* It cannot, therefore, be the subject of pain?

*Hylas.* By no means.

*Philonous.* Nor, consequently, of the greatest heat perceived by sense, since you acknowledge this to be no small pain?

*Hylas.* I grant it.

*Philonous.* What shall we say, then, of your external object: is it a material substance, or no?

*Hylas.* It is a material substance with the sensible qualities inhering in it.

*Philonous.* How, then, can a great heat exist in it, since you own it cannot in a material substance? I desire you would clear this point.

*Hylas.* Hold, Philonous, — I fear I was out in yielding intense heat to be a pain. It should seem rather that pain is something distinct from heat, and the consequence or effect of it.

*Philonous.* Upon putting your hand near the fire, do you perceive one simple uniform sensation, or two distinct sensations?

*Hylas.* But one simple sensation.

*Philonous.* Is not the heat immediately perceived?

*Hylas.* It is.

*Philonous.* And the pain?

*Hylas.* True.

*Philonous.* Seeing, therefore, they are both immediately



perceived at the same time, and the fire affects you only with one simple or uncompounded idea, it follows that this same simple idea is both the intense heat immediately perceived, and the pain; and, consequently, that the intense heat immediately perceived is nothing distinct from a particular sort of pain.

*Hylas.* It seems so.

*Philonous.* Again, try in your thoughts, Hylas, if you can conceive a vehement sensation to be without pain or pleasure.

*Hylas.* I cannot.

*Philonous.* Or can you frame to yourself an idea of sensible pain or pleasure in general, abstracted from every particular idea of heat, cold, tastes, smells, etc?

*Hylas.* I do not find that I can.

*Philonous.* Doth it not therefore follow that sensible pain is nothing distinct from those sensations or ideas, in an intense degree?

*Hylas.* It is undeniable; and, to speak the truth, I begin to suspect a very great heat cannot exist but in a mind perceiving it.

*Philonous.* What! are you then in that *skeptical* state of suspense, between affirming and denying?

*Hylas.* I think I may be positive in the point. A very violent and painful heat cannot exist without the mind.

*Philonous.* It hath not, therefore, according to you, any real being?

*Hylas.* I own it.

*Philonous.* Is it therefore certain that there is no body in nature really hot?

*Hylas.* I have not denied there is any real heat in bodies. I only say there is no such thing as an intense real heat.

*Philonous.* But did you not say before that all degrees of heat were equally real; or, if there was any difference, that the greater were more undoubtedly real than the lesser?

*Hylas.* True: but it was because I did not then consider the ground there is for distinguishing between them, which I now plainly see. And it is this: because intense heat is nothing else but a particular kind of painful sensation, and pain cannot exist but in a perceiving being, it follows that no intense heat can really exist in an unperceiving corporeal substance. But this

is no reason why we should deny heat in an inferior degree to exist in such a substance.

*Philonous.* But how shall we be able to discern those degrees of heat which exist only in the mind from those which exist without it?

*Hylas.* That is no difficult matter. You know the least pain cannot exist unperceived; whatever, therefore, degree of heat is a pain exists only in the mind. But as for all other degrees of heat, nothing obliges us to think the same of them.

*Philonous.* I think you granted before that no unperceiving being was capable of pleasure, any more than of pain.

*Hylas.* I did.

*Philonous.* And is not warmth, or a more gentle degree of heat than what causes uneasiness, a pleasure?

*Hylas.* What then?

*Philonous.* Consequently it cannot exist without the mind in an unperceiving substance or body.

*Hylas.* So it seems.

*Philonous.* Since, therefore, as well those degrees of heat that are not painful, as those that are, can exist only in a thinking substance, may we not conclude that external bodies are absolutely incapable of any degree of heat whatsoever?

*Hylas.* On second thoughts, I do not think it is so evident that warmth is a pleasure, as that a great degree of heat is a pain.

*Philonous.* I do not pretend that warmth is as great a pleasure as heat is a pain. But, if you grant it to be even a small pleasure, it serves to make good my conclusion.

*Hylas.* I could rather call it an *indolence*. It seems to be nothing more than a privation of both pain and pleasure. And that such a quality or state as this may agree to an unthinking substance, I hope you will not deny.

*Philonous.* If you are resolved to maintain that warmth, or a gentle degree of heat, is no pleasure, I know not how to convince you otherwise than by appealing to your own sense. But what think you of cold?

*Hylas.* The same that I do of heat. An intense degree of cold is a pain; for to feel a very great cold is to perceive a great uneasiness; it cannot, therefore, exist without the mind. But a lesser degree of cold may, as well as a lesser degree of heat.

*Philonous.* Those bodies, therefore, upon whose application to our own we perceive a moderate degree of heat, must be concluded to have a moderate degree of heat or warmth in them; and those upon whose application we feel a like degree of cold, must be thought to have cold in them.

*Hylas.* They must.

*Philonous.* Can any doctrine be true that necessarily leads a man into an absurdity?

*Hylas.* Without doubt it cannot.

*Philonous.* Is it not an absurdity to think that the same thing should be at the same time both cold and warm?

*Hylas.* It is.

*Philonous.* Suppose, now, one of your hands hot, and the other cold, and that they are both at once put into the same vessel of water, in an intermediate state; will not the water seem cold to one hand and warm to the other?

*Hylas.* It will.

*Philonous.* Ought we not, therefore, by your principles, to conclude it is really both cold and warm at the same time, — that is, according to your own concession, to believe an absurdity?

*Hylas.* I confess it seems so.

*Philonous.* Consequently the principles themselves are false, since you have granted that no true principle leads to an absurdity.

*Hylas.* But, after all, can anything be more absurd than to say “there is no heat in the fire”?

*Philonous.* To make the point still clearer — tell me whether in two cases exactly alike we ought not to make the same judgment.

*Hylas.* We ought.

*Philonous.* When a pin pricks your finger, doth it not rend and divide the fibres of your flesh?

*Hylas.* It doth.

*Philonous.* And when a coal burns your finger, doth it any more?

*Hylas.* It doth not.

*Philonous.* Since, therefore, you neither judge the sensation itself occasioned by the pin, nor anything like it to be in the pin, you should not, conformably to what you have now granted,



judge the sensation occasioned by the fire, or anything like it, to be in the fire.

*Hylas.* Well, since it must be so, I am content to yield this point, and acknowledge that heat and cold are only sensations existing in our minds. But there still remain qualities enough to secure the reality of external things.

*Philonous.* But what will you say, Hylas, if it shall appear that the case is the same with regard to all other sensible qualities, and that they can no more be supposed to exist without the mind than heat and cold?

*Hylas.* Then indeed you will have done something to the purpose; but that is what I despair of seeing proved. . . .

*Philonous.* Then as to sounds, what must we think of them? Are they accidents really inherent in external bodies, or not?

*Hylas.* That they inhere not in the sonorous bodies is plain from hence: because a bell struck in the exhausted receiver of an air-pump sends forth no sound. The air, therefore, must be thought the subject of sound.

*Philonous.* What reason is there for that, Hylas?

*Hylas.* Because, when any motion is raised in the air, we perceive a sound greater or lesser, according to the air's motion; but without some motion in the air we never hear any sound at all.

*Philonous.* And granting that we never hear a sound but when some motion is produced in the air, yet I do not see how you can infer from thence that the sound itself is in the air.

*Hylas.* It is this very motion in the external air that produces in the mind the sensation of sound. For, striking on the drum of the ear, it causeth a vibration, which by the auditory nerves being communicated to the brain, the soul is thereupon affected with the sensation called *sound*.

*Philonous.* What! is sound, then, a sensation?

*Hylas.* I tell you, as perceived by us, it is a particular sensation in the mind.

*Philonous.* And can any sensation exist without the mind?

*Hylas.* No, certainly.

*Philonous.* How then can sound, being a sensation, exist in the air, if by the air you mean a senseless substance existing without the mind?

*Hylas.* You must distinguish, Philonous, between sound as it

is perceived by us, and as it is in itself, or — which is the same thing — between the sound we immediately perceive, and that which exists without us. The former, indeed, is a particular kind of sensation, but the latter is merely a vibrative or undulatory motion in the air.

*Philonous.* I thought I had already obviated that distinction, by the answer I gave when you were applying it in a like case before. But, to say no more of that, are you sure, then, that sound is really nothing but motion?

*Hylas.* I am.

*Philonous.* Whatever, therefore, agrees to real sound, may with truth be attributed to motion?

*Hylas.* It may.

*Philonous.* It is then good sense to speak of motion as of a thing that is *loud, sweet, acute, or grave.*

*Hylas.* I see you are resolved not to understand me. Is it not evident those accidents or modes belong only to sensible sound, or sound in the common acceptation of the word, but not to sound in the real and philosophic sense? — which, as I just now told you, is nothing but a certain motion of the air.

*Philonous.* It seems, then, there are two sorts of sound, — the one vulgar, or that which is heard, the other philosophical and real?

*Hylas.* Even so.

*Philonous.* And the latter consists in motion?

*Hylas.* I told you so before.

*Philonous.* Tell me, Hylas, to which of the senses, think you, the idea of motion belongs? to the hearing?

*Hylas.* No, certainly; but to the sight and touch.

*Philonous.* It should follow, then, that, according to you, real sounds may possibly be seen or felt, but never heard.

*Hylas.* Look you, Philonous, you may, if you please, make a jest of my opinion, but that will not alter the truth of things. I own, indeed, the inferences you draw me into sound something oddly; but common language, you know, is framed by, and for the use of, the vulgar; we must not therefore wonder, if expressions adapted to exact philosophic notions seem uncouth and out of the way.

*Philonous.* Is it come to that? I assure you, I imagine myself to have gained no small point, since you make so light of part-

ing from common phrases and opinions; it being a main part of our inquiry to examine whose notions are widest of the common road, and most repugnant to the general sense of the world. But can you think it no more than a philosophical paradox, to say that *real sounds are never heard*, and that the idea of them is obtained by some other sense? And is there nothing in this contrary to nature and the truth of things?

*Hylas.* To deal ingenuously, I do not like it. And, after the concessions already made, I had as well grant that sounds too have no real being without the mind.

*Philonous.* Well, then, are you at length satisfied that no sensible things have a real existence, and that you are in truth an arrant skeptic?

*Hylas.* It is too plain to be denied.

*Philonous.* Look! are not the fields covered with a delightful verdure? Is there not something in the woods and groves, in the rivers and clear springs, that soothes, that delights, that transports the soul? At the prospect of the wide and deep ocean, or some huge mountain whose top is lost in the clouds, or of an old gloomy forest, are not our minds filled with a pleasing horror? Even in rocks and deserts is there not an agreeable wildness? How sincere a pleasure is it to behold the natural beauties of the earth! To preserve and renew our relish for them, is not the veil of night alternately drawn over her face, and doth she not change her dress with the seasons? How aptly are the elements disposed! What variety and use in the meanest productions of nature! What delicacy, what beauty, what contrivance, in animal and vegetable bodies! How exquisitely are all things suited, as well to their particular ends, as to constitute opposite parts of the whole! And, while they mutually aid and support, do they not also set off and illustrate each other? Raise now your thoughts from this ball of earth to all those glorious luminaries that adorn the high arch of heaven. The motion and situation of the planets, — are they not admirable for use and order? Were those — miscalled *erratic* — globes once known to stray, in their repeated journeys through the pathless void? Do they not measure areas round the sun ever proportioned to the times? So fixed, so immutable are the laws by which the unseen Author of nature actuates the universe.



How vivid and radiant is the lustre of the fixed stars! How magnificent and rich that negligent profusion with which they appear to be scattered throughout the whole azure vault! yet, if you take the telescope, it brings into your sight a new host of stars that escape the naked eye. Here they seem contiguous and minute, but to a nearer view immense orbs of light, at various distances, far sunk in the abyss of space. Now you must call imagination to your aid. The feeble narrow sense cannot descry innumerable worlds revolving round the central fires, and in those worlds the energy of an all-perfect Mind displayed in endless forms. But neither sense nor imagination are big enough to comprehend the boundless extent, with all its glittering furniture. Though the laboring mind exert and strain each power to its utmost reach, there still stands out ungrasped a surplusage immeasurable. Yet all the vast bodies that compose this mighty frame, how distant and remote soever, are by some secret mechanism, some divine art and force, linked in a mutual dependence and intercourse with each other, even with this earth, which was almost slipped from my thoughts and lost in the crowd of worlds. Is not the whole system immense, beautiful, glorious beyond expression and beyond thought! What treatment, then, do those philosophers deserve, who would deprive these noble and delightful scenes of all reality? How should those principles be entertained that lead us to think all the visible beauty of the creation a false imaginary glare? To be plain, can you expect this skepticism of yours will not be thought extravagantly absurd by all men of sense?

*Hylas.* Other men may think as they please, but for your part you have nothing to reproach me with. My comfort is, you are as much a skeptic as I am.

*Philonous.* There, Hylas, I must beg leave to differ from you.

*Hylas.* What! Have you all along agreed to the premises, and do you now deny the conclusion, and leave me to maintain those paradoxes by myself which you led me into? This surely is not fair.

*Philonous.* I deny that I agreed with you in those notions that led to skepticism. You indeed said the reality of sensible things consisted in an *absolute existence* out of the minds of spirits, or distinct from their being perceived. And, pursuant to this notion of reality, you are obliged to deny sensible things

any real existence; that is, according to your own definition, you profess yourself a skeptic. But I neither said nor thought the reality of sensible things was to be defined after that manner. To me it is evident, for the reasons you allow of, that sensible things cannot exist otherwise than in a mind or spirit. Whence I conclude, not that they have no real existence, but that, seeing they depend not on my thought, and have an existence distinct from being perceived by me, *there must be some other mind wherein they exist*. As sure, therefore, as the sensible world really exists, so sure is there an infinite, omnipresent Spirit, who contains and supports it.

*Hylas*. What! This is no more than I and all Christians hold; nay, and all others too who believe there is a God, and that He knows and comprehends all things.

*Philonous*. Aye, but here lies the difference. Men commonly believe that all things are known or perceived by God, because they believe the being of a God; whereas I, on the other side, immediately and necessarily conclude the being of a God, because all sensible things must be perceived by Him.

*Hylas*. . . . It is plain I do not now think with the philosophers, nor yet altogether with the vulgar. I would know how the case stands in that respect; precisely what you have added to or altered in my former notions.

*Philonous*. I do not pretend to be a setter-up of new notions. My endeavors tend only to unite and place in a clearer light that truth which was before shared between the vulgar and the philosophers, — the former being of opinion that those things they immediately perceive are the real things, and the latter, that the things immediately perceived are ideas which exist only in the mind. Which two notions, put together, do in effect constitute the substance of what I advance.

*Hylas*. I have been a long time distrusting my senses; methought I saw things by a dim light and through false glasses. Now the glasses are removed, and a new light breaks in upon my understanding. I am clearly convinced that I see things in their native forms, and am no longer in pain about their unknown natures or absolute existence. This is the state I find myself in at present; though, indeed, the course that brought me to it I do not yet thoroughly comprehend. You set out

upon the same principles that Academics, Cartesians, and the like sects usually do, and for a long time it looked as if you were advancing their philosophical skepticism; but in the end your conclusions are directly opposite to theirs.

*Philonous.* You see, Hylas, the water of yonder fountain, — how it is forced upwards, in a round column, to a certain height, at which it breaks, and falls back into the basin from whence it rose; its ascent as well as descent proceeding from the same uniform law or principle of gravitation. Just so, the same principles which at first view lead to skepticism, pursued to a certain point, bring men back to common sense.



BERNARD MANDEVILLE  
THE FABLE OF THE BEES  
OR, PRIVATE VICES PUBLIC BENEFITS  
1714, 1723

[*The Fable of the Bees* is a composite work, consisting of "The Grumbling Hive," a poem which had been separately published in 1705, the "Inquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue" (which appeared in the 1714 volume), the "Search into the Nature of Society" (which was added in 1723), and other Essays and Remarks. The book was denounced as a nuisance by the Grand Jury of Middlesex, in 1723, and many replies to it were published, — by Berkeley, among others, in *Alciphron*. Some of the positions of Shaftesbury which Mandeville attacks in detail will be found represented in the extracts from *Characteristics*; see above, pages 223-230.]

AN INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN OF MORAL VIRTUE

ALL untaught animals are only solicitous of pleasing themselves, and naturally follow the bent of their own inclinations, without considering the good or harm that from their being pleased will accrue to others. This is the reason that in the wild state of nature those creatures are fittest to live peaceably together in great numbers that discover the least of understanding, and have the fewest appetites to gratify; and consequently no species of animals is, without the curb of government, less capable of agreeing long together in multitudes than that of man. Yet such are his qualities, whether good or bad I shall not determine, that no creature besides himself can ever be made sociable; but being an extraordinary selfish and headstrong, as well as cunning animal, however he may be subdued by superior strength, it is impossible by force alone to make him tractable, and receive the improvements he is capable of.

The chief thing, therefore, which lawgivers and other wise men that have labored for the establishment of society, have endeavored, has been to make the people they were to govern believe that it was more beneficial for everybody to conquer than indulge his appetites, and much better to mind the public

than what seemed his private interest. As this has always been a very difficult task, so no wit or eloquence has been left untried to compass it, and the moralists and philosophers of all ages employed their utmost skill to prove the truth of so useful an assertion. But whether mankind would have ever believed it or not, it is not likely that anybody could have persuaded them to disapprove of their natural inclinations, or prefer the good of others to their own, if at the same time he had not showed them an equivalent to be enjoyed as a reward for the violence which by so doing they of necessity must commit upon themselves. Those that have undertaken to civilize mankind were not ignorant of this; but being unable to give so many real rewards as would satisfy all persons for every individual action, they were forced to contrive an imaginary one, that as a general equivalent for the trouble of self-denial should serve on all occasions, and, without costing anything either to themselves or others, be yet a most acceptable recompense to the receivers.

They thoroughly examined all the strength and frailties of our nature, and, observing that none were either so savage as not to be charmed with praise, or so despicable as patiently to bear contempt, justly concluded that flattery must be the most powerful argument that could be used to human creatures. Making use of this bewitching engine, they extolled the excellency of our nature above other animals, and, setting forth with unbounded praises the wonders of our sagacity and vastness of understanding, bestowed a thousand encomiums on the rationality of our souls, by the help of which we were capable of performing the most noble achievements. Having by this artful way of flattery insinuated themselves into the hearts of men, they began to instruct them in the notions of honor and shame; representing the one as the worst of all evils, and the other as the highest good to which mortals could aspire. Which being done, they laid before them how unbecoming it was the dignity of such sublime creatures to be solicitous about gratifying those appetites which they had in common with brutes, and at the same time unmindful of those higher qualities that gave them the preëminence over all visible things. They indeed confessed that those impulses of nature were very pressing, that it was troublesome to resist, and very difficult wholly to subdue them. But this they only used as an argument to

demonstrate how glorious the conquest of them was, on the one hand, and how scandalous, on the other, not to attempt it.

To introduce, moreover, an emulation amongst men, they divided the whole species into two classes, vastly differing from one another. The one consisted of abject, low-minded people, that, always hunting after immediate enjoyment, were wholly incapable of self-denial, and, without regard to the good of others, had no higher aim than their private advantage; such as, being enslaved by voluptuousness, yielded without resistance to every gross desire, and made no use of their rational faculties but to heighten their sensual pleasure. These vile groveling wretches, they said, were the dross of their kind, and, having only the shape of men, differed from brutes in nothing but their outward figure. But the other class was made up of lofty, high-spirited creatures, that, free from sordid selfishness, esteemed the improvements of the mind to be their fairest possessions, and, setting a true value upon themselves, took no delight but in embellishing that part in which their excellency consisted; such as, despising whatever they had in common with irrational creatures, opposed by the help of reason their most violent inclinations, and, making a continual war with themselves to promote the peace of others, aimed at no less than the public welfare and the conquest of their own passion,

*Fortior est qui se quam qui fortissima vincit  
Mœnia.<sup>1</sup>*

These they called the true representatives of their sublime species, exceeding in worth the first class by more degrees than that itself was superior to the beasts of the field. . . .

This was (or at least might have been) the manner after which savage man was broke; from whence it is evident that the first rudiments of morality, broached by skillful politicians to render men useful to each other as well as tractable, were chiefly contrived that the ambitious might reap the more benefit from, and govern vast numbers of, them, with the greater ease and security. This foundation of politics being once laid, it is impossible that man should long remain uncivilized; for even those who only strove to gratify their appetites, being continually crossed by others of the same stamp, could not but observe that, whenever they checked their inclinations, or but

<sup>1</sup> "He who conquers himself is stronger than he who overcomes the strongest walls."



followed them with more circumspection, they avoided a world of troubles, and often escaped many of the calamities that generally attended the too eager pursuit after pleasure.

First, they received, as well as others, the benefit of those actions that were done for the good of the whole society, and consequently could not forbear wishing well to those of the superior class that performed them. Secondly, the more intent they were in seeking their own advantage without regard to others, the more they were hourly convinced that none stood so much in their way as those that were most like themselves.

It being the interest, then, of the very worst of them, more than any, to preach up public-spiritedness, that they might reap the fruits of the labor and self-denial of others, and at the same time indulge their own appetites with less disturbance, they agreed with the rest to call everything which, without regard to the public, man should commit to gratify any of his appetites, VICE, if in that action there could be observed the least prospect that it might either be injurious to any of the society or ever render himself less serviceable to others; and to give the name of VIRTUE to every performance by which man, contrary to the impulse of nature, should endeavor the benefit of others or the conquest of his own passions, out of a rational ambition of being good. . . .

It is visible, then, that it was not any heathen religion or other idolatrous superstition that first put man upon crossing his appetites and subduing his dearest inclinations, but the skillful management of wary politicians; and the nearer we search into human nature, the more we shall be convinced that the moral virtues are the political offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride.

There is no man, of what capacity or penetration soever, that is wholly proof against the witchcraft of flattery, if artfully performed and suited to his abilities. Children and fools will swallow personal praise, but those that are more cunning must be managed with greater circumspection, and the more general the flattery is, the less it is suspected by those it is leveled at. What you say in commendation of a whole town is received with pleasure by all the inhabitants; speak in commendation of letters in general, and every man of learning will think himself in particular obliged to you. You may safely praise the

employment a man is of, or the country he was born in, because you give him an opportunity of screening the joy he feels upon his own account, under the esteem which he pretends to have for others.

It is common among cunning men, that understand the power which flattery has upon pride, when they are afraid they shall be imposed upon, to enlarge, though much against their conscience, upon the honor, fair dealing, and integrity of the family, country, or sometimes the profession of him they suspect; because they know that men often will change their resolution, and act against their inclination, that they may have the pleasure of continuing to appear, in the opinion of some, what they are conscious not to be in reality. Thus sagacious moralists draw men like angels, in hopes that the pride at least of some will put them upon copying after the beautiful originals which they are represented to be.

When the incomparable Sir Richard Steele, in the usual elegance of his easy style, dwells on the praises of his sublime species, and with all the embellishments of rhetoric sets forth the excellency of human nature, it is impossible not to be charmed with his happy turns of thought and the politeness of his expressions. But, though I have been often moved by the force of his eloquence, and ready to swallow the ingenious sophistry with pleasure, yet I could never be so serious but, reflecting on his artful encomiums, I thought on the tricks made use of by the women that would teach children to be mannerly. When an awkward girl, before she can either speak or go, begins after many entreaties to make the first rude essays of curtesying, the nurse falls in an ecstasy of praise. "There's a delicate curtesy! O fine Miss! There's a pretty lady! Mamma! Miss can make a better curtesy than her sister Molly!" The same is echoed over by the maids, whilst mamma almost hugs the child to pieces; only Miss Molly, who, being four years older, knows how to make a very handsome curtesy, wonders at the perverseness of their judgment, and, swelling with indignation, is ready to cry at the injustice that is done her, till, being whispered in the ear that it is only to please the baby, and that she is a woman, she grows proud at being let into the secret, and, rejoicing at the superiority of her understanding, repeats what has been said with large additions, and insults over the weakness of her sister,

whom all this while she fancies to be the only bubble among them. These extravagant praises would, by any one above the capacity of an infant, be called fulsome flatteries, and (if you will) abominable lies; yet experience teaches us that by the help of such gross encomiums young misses will be brought to make pretty curtesies and behave themselves womanly, much sooner and with less trouble than they would without them. 'T is the same with boys, whom they'll strive to persuade that all fine gentlemen do as they are bid, and that none but beggar boys are rude or dirty their clothes; nay, as soon as the wild brat with his untaught fist begins to fumble for his hat, the mother, to make him pull it off, tells him before he is two years old that he is a man, and, if he repeats that action when she desires him, he's presently a captain, a Lord Mayor, a king, or something higher if she can think of it, till, egged on by the force of praise, the little urchin endeavors to imitate man as well as he can, and strains all his faculties to appear what his shallow noddle imagines he is believed to be.

The meanest wretch puts an inestimable value upon himself, and the highest wish of the ambitious man is to have all the world, as to that particular, of his opinion. So that the most insatiable thirst after fame that ever hero was inspired with, was never more than an ungovernable greediness to engross the esteem and admiration of others in future ages as well as his own; and (what mortification soever this truth might be to the second thoughts of an Alexander or a Cæsar) the great recompense in view, for which the most exalted minds have with so much alacrity sacrificed their quiet, health, sensual pleasures, and every inch of themselves, has never been anything else but the breath of man, the aerial coin of praise. . . .

#### A SEARCH INTO THE NATURE OF SOCIETY

The generality of moralists and philosophers have hitherto agreed that there could be no virtue without self-denial; but a late author, who is now much read by men of sense, is of a contrary opinion, and imagines that men, without any trouble or violence upon themselves, may be naturally virtuous. He seems to require and expect goodness in his species, as we do a sweet taste in grapes and China oranges, of which, if any of them are sour, we boldly pronounce that they are not come to that per-



fection their nature is capable of. This noble writer (for it is the Lord Shaftesbury I mean, in his *Characteristics*) fancies that, as man is made for society, so he ought to be born with a kind affection to the whole of which he is a part, and a propensity to seek the welfare of it. In pursuance of this supposition, he calls every action performed with regard to the public good, virtuous, and all selfishness, wholly excluding such a regard, vice. In respect to our species he looks upon virtue and vice as permanent realities, that must ever be the same in all countries and ages, and imagines that a man of sound understanding, by following the rules of good sense, may not only find out that *pulchrum et honestum* both in morality and the works of art and nature, but likewise govern himself by his reason with as much ease and readiness as a good rider manages a well-taught horse by the bridle.

The attentive reader, who perused the foregoing part of this book, will soon perceive that two systems cannot be more opposite than his Lordship's and mine. His notions, I confess, are generous and refined; they are a high compliment to humankind, and capable, by the help of a little enthusiasm, of inspiring us with the most noble sentiments concerning the dignity of our exalted nature. What pity it is that they are not true! I would not advance thus much if I had not already demonstrated, in almost every page of this treatise, that the solidity of them is inconsistent with our daily experience. But, to leave not the least shadow of an objection that might be made unanswered, I design to expatiate on some things which hitherto I have but slightly touched upon, in order to convince the reader, not only that the good and amiable qualities of man are not those that make him beyond other animals a sociable creature, but, moreover, that it would be utterly impossible either to raise any multitudes into a populous, rich, and flourishing nation, or, when so raised, to keep and maintain them in that condition, without the assistance of what we call evil, both natural and moral.

The better to perform what I have undertaken, I shall previously examine into the reality of the *pulchrum et honestum*, the τὸ καλόν that the ancients have talked of so much. The meaning of this is to discuss whether there be a real worth and excellency in things, a preëminence of one above another,

which everybody will always agree to that well understands them, or that there are few things, if any, that have the same esteem paid them, and which the same judgment is passed upon, in all countries and all ages. When we first set out in quest of this intrinsic worth, and find one thing better than another, and a third better than that, and so on, we begin to entertain great hopes of success; but when we meet with several things that are all very good or all very bad, we are puzzled, and agree not always with ourselves, much less with others. There are different faults, as well as beauties, that, as modes and fashions alter, and men vary in their tastes and humors, will be differently admired or disapproved of.

Judges of painting will never disagree in opinion, when a fine picture is compared to the daubing of a novice; but how strangely have they differed as to the works of eminent masters! There are parties among connoisseurs, and few of them agree in their esteem as to ages and countries; and the best pictures bear not always the best prices: a noted original will be ever worth more than any copy that can be made of it by an unknown hand, though it should be better. The value that is set on paintings depends not only on the name of the master, and the time of his age he drew them in, but likewise in a great measure on the scarcity of his works, and — what is still more unreasonable — the quality of the persons in whose possession they are, as well as the length of time they have been in great families. And if the cartoons now at Hampton Court were done by a less famous hand than that of Raphael, and had a private person for their owner, who would be forced to sell them, they would never yield the tenth part of the money which, with all their gross faults, they are now esteemed to be worth. . . .

In morals there is no greater certainty. Plurality of wives is odious among Christians, and all the wit and learning of a great genius in defense of it has been rejected with contempt; but polygamy is not shocking to a Mahometan. What men have learned from their infancy enslaves them, and the force of custom warps nature, and at the same time imitates her in such a manner that it is often difficult to know which of the two we are influenced by. In the East formerly sisters married brothers, and it was meritorious for a man to marry his mother. Such alliances are abominable; but it is certain that, whatever horror

we conceive at the thoughts of them, there is nothing in nature repugnant against them, but what is built upon mode and custom. A religious Mahometan, that has never tasted any spirituous liquor, and has often seen people drunk, may receive as great an aversion against wine as another with us, of the least morality and education, may have against marrying his sister, and both imagine that their antipathy proceeds from nature. Which is the best religion? is a question that has caused more mischief than all other questions together. Ask it at Peking, at Constantinople, and at Rome, and you'll receive three distinct answers extremely different from one another, yet all of them equally positive and peremptory. Christians are well assured of the falsity of the pagan and Mahometan superstitions; as to this point there is a perfect union and concord among them; but inquire of the several sects they are divided into, Which is the true Church of Christ? and all of them will tell you it is theirs, and, to convince you, go together by the ears.

It is manifest, then, that the hunting after this *pulchrum et honestum* is not much better than a wild-goose chase that is but little to be depended upon. But this is not the greatest fault I find with it. The imaginary notions that men may be virtuous without self-denial are a vast inlet to hypocrisy, which being once made habitual, we must not only deceive others, but likewise become altogether unknown to ourselves; and in an instance I am going to give, it will appear how, for want of duly examining himself, this might happen to a person of quality of parts and erudition, — one every way resembling the author of the *Characteristics* himself.

A man that has been brought up in ease and affluence, if he is of a quiet, indolent nature, learns to shun everything that is troublesome, and chooses to curb his passions more because of the inconveniencies that arise from the eager pursuit after pleasure, and the yielding to all the demands of our inclinations, than any dislike he has to sensual enjoyments. And it is possible that a person educated under a great philosopher,<sup>1</sup> who was a mild and good-natured as well as able tutor, may in such happy circumstances have a better opinion of his inward state than it really deserves, and believe himself virtuous because his passions lie dormant. He may form fine notions of the social

<sup>1</sup> John Locke (in Shaftesbury's case).



virtues, and the contempt of death, write well of them in his closet, and talk eloquently of them in company; but you shall never catch him fighting for his country, or laboring to retrieve any national losses. A man that deals in metaphysics may easily throw himself into an enthusiasm, and really believe that he does not fear death, whilst it remains out of sight. But should he be asked why, having this intrepidity, either from nature or acquired by philosophy, he did not follow arms when his country was involved in war; or, when he saw the nation daily robbed by those at the helm, and the affairs of the exchequer perplexed, why he did not go to court, and make use of all his friends and interests to be a Lord Treasurer, that by his integrity and wise management he might restore the public credit, — it is probable he would answer that he loved retirement, had no other ambition than to be a good man, and never aspired to have any share in the government, or, that he hated all flattery and slavish attendance, the insincerity of courts and bustle of the world. I am willing to believe him; but may not a man of an indolent temper and unactive spirit say — and be sincere in — all this, and at the same time indulge his appetites without being able to subdue them, though his duty summons him to it? Virtue consists in action, and whoever is possessed of this social love and kind affection to his species, and by his birth or quality can claim any post in the public management, ought not to sit still when he can be serviceable, but exert himself to the utmost for the good of his fellow-subjects. Had this noble person been of a warlike genius or a boisterous temper, he would have chose another part in the drama of life, and preached a quite contrary doctrine; for we are ever pushing our reason which way soever we feel passion to draw it, and self-love pleads to all human creatures for their different views, still furnishing every individual with arguments to justify their inclinations. . . .

# LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

## LETTERS

[An unauthorized edition of Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was published in 1763, and these were republished, with additions, at various dates, to the time of the edition of Mr. Moy Thomas, 1861. The letters from the East (written while Lady Mary's husband was English ambassador to the Porte) were given by her to a Rev. Mr. Sowden; and another copy (not identical) she gave to Mr. Molesworth. It has been suspected that they were edited before being copied, or in some cases made from diary notes. The Sowden text, as printed by Mr. Thomas, is used here; the family letters were also printed by him from original MSS. The Countess of Bute was Lady Mary's daughter, and her constant correspondent during her long residence on the Continent, 1739-62.]

TO MR. POPE

ADRIANOPLE, April 1, 1717.

I DARE say you expect at least something very new in this letter, after I have gone a journey not undertaken by any Christian for some hundred years. The most remarkable accident that happened to me, was my being very near overturned into the Hebrus; and, if I had much regard for the glories that one's name enjoys after death, I should certainly be sorry for having missed the romantic conclusion of swimming down the same river in which the musical head of Orpheus repeated verses so many ages since. . . . Who knows but some of your bright wits might have found it a subject affording many poetical turns, and have told the world, in an heroic elegy, that,

As equal were our souls, so equal were our fates?

I despair of ever having so many fine things said of me, as so extraordinary a death would have given occasion for.

I am at this present writing in a house situated on the banks of the Hebrus, which runs under my chamber window. My garden is full of tall cypress-trees, upon the branches of which several couple of true turtles are saying soft things to one another from morning till night. How naturally do boughs and vows come into my head at this minute! And must you not

confess, to my praise, that 'tis more than ordinary discretion that can resist the wicked suggestions of poetry, in a place where truth, for once, furnishes all the ideas of pastoral? The summer is already far advanced in this part of the world; and, for some miles round Adrianople, the whole ground is laid out in gardens, and the banks of the river set with rows of fruit-trees, under which all the most considerable Turks divert themselves every evening; — not with walking, — that is not one of their pleasures; but a set party of them choose out a green spot, where the shade is very thick, and there they spread a carpet, on which they sit drinking their coffee, and generally attended by some slave with a fine voice, or that plays on some instrument. . . . The young lads generally divert themselves with making garlands for their favorite lambs, which I have often seen, painted and adorned with flowers, lying at their feet while they sung or played. It is not that they ever read romances, but these are the ancient amusements here, and as natural to them as cudgel-playing and football to our British swains; the softness and warmth of the climate forbidding all rough exercises, which were never so much as heard of amongst them, and naturally inspiring a laziness and aversion to labor, which the great plenty indulges. . . . I no longer look upon Theocritus as a romantic writer; he has only given a plain image of the way of life amongst the peasants of his country, who, before oppression had reduced them to want, were, I suppose, all employed as the better sort of them are now. I don't doubt, had he been born a Briton, his *Idylliums* had been filled with descriptions of threshing and churning, both which are unknown here, the corn being all trod out by oxen, and butter (I speak it with sorrow) unheard of.

I read over your *Homer* here with an infinite pleasure, and find several little passages explained, that I did not before entirely comprehend the beauty of; many of the customs, and much of the dress then in fashion, being yet retained; and I don't wonder to find more remains here of an age so distant, than is to be found in any other country, the Turks not taking that pains to introduce their own manners as has been generally practiced by other nations that imagine themselves more polite.



## TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR

PERA OF CONSTANTINOPLE, March 10, 1718.

. . . We travelers are in very hard circumstances. If we say nothing but what has been said before us, we are dull, and we have observed nothing. If we tell anything new, we are laughed at as fabulous and romantic, not allowing for the difference of ranks, which afford difference of company, more curiosity, or the change of customs, that happen every twenty years in every country. But people judge of travelers exactly with the same candor, good nature, and impartiality, they judge of their neighbors upon all occasions. For my part, if I live to return amongst you, I am so well acquainted with the morals of all my dear friends and acquaintance, that I am resolved to tell them nothing at all, to avoid the imputation (which their charity would certainly incline them to) of my telling too much. But I depend upon your knowing me enough to believe whatever I seriously assert for truth, though I give you leave to be surprised at an account so new to you.

But what would you say if I told you that I have been in a harem where the winter apartment was wainscoted with inlaid work of mother-of-pearl, ivory of different colors, and olive wood, exactly like the little boxes you have seen brought out of this country; and those rooms designed for summer, the walls all crusted with japan china, the roofs gilt, and the floors spread with the finest Persian carpets? Yet there is nothing more true; such is the palace of my lovely friend, the fair Fatima, whom I was acquainted with at Adrianople. I went to visit her yesterday; and, if possible, she appeared to me handsomer than before. She met me at the door of her chamber, and, giving me her hand with the best grace in the world, — “You Christian ladies,” said she, with a smile that made her as handsome as an angel, “have the reputation of inconstancy, and I did not expect, whatever goodness you expressed for me at Adrianople, that I should ever see you again. But I am now convinced that I have really the happiness of pleasing you; and if you knew how I speak of you amongst our ladies, you would be assured that you do me justice if you think me your friend.” She placed me in the corner of the sofa, and I spent the afternoon in her conversation, with the greatest pleasure in the world.

The Sultana Hafiten is, what one would naturally expect to find a Turkish lady, willing to oblige, but not knowing how to go about it; and it is easy to see in her manner that she has lived secluded from the world. But Fatima has all the politeness and good breeding of a court, with an air that inspires at once respect and tenderness; and now I understand her language, I find her wit as engaging as her beauty. She is very curious after the manners of other countries, and has not that partiality for her own, so common to little minds. . . . I assured her that, if all the Turkish ladies were like her, it was absolutely necessary to confine them from public view, for the repose of mankind; and proceeded to tell her what a noise such a face as hers would make in London or Paris. "I can't believe you," replied she, agreeably. "If beauty was so much valued in your country as you say, they would never have suffered you to leave it." Perhaps, dear sister, you laugh at my vanity in repeating this compliment; but I only do it as I think it very well turned, and give it you as an instance of the spirit of her conversation.

## TO THE ABBÉ CONTI

CONSTANTINOPLE, May 19, 1718.

. . . Thus you see, sir, these people are not so unpolished as we represent them. 'Tis true their magnificence is of a different taste from ours, and perhaps of a better. I am almost of opinion they have a right notion of life, while they consume it in music, gardens, wine, and delicate eating, — while we are tormenting ourselves with some scheme of politics, or studying some science to which we can never attain, or, if we do, cannot persuade people to set that value upon it we do ourselves. 'Tis certain what we feel and see is properly (if anything is properly) our own; but the good of fame, the folly of praise, hardly purchased, and, when obtained, a poor recompense for loss of time and health. We die, or grow old and decrepit, before we can reap the fruit of our labors. Considering what short-lived, weak animals men are, is there any study so beneficial as the study of present pleasure? I dare not pursue this theme; perhaps I have already said too much, but I depend upon the true knowledge you have of my heart. I don't expect from you the insipid railleries I should suffer from another, in answer to this letter. You know how to divide the idea of pleasure from that of vice,

and they are only mingled in the heads of fools. But I allow you to laugh at me for the sensual declaration that I had rather be a rich *effendi*, with all his ignorance, than Sir Isaac Newton with all his knowledge.

## TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET

[March, 1739.]

. . . At the last warm debate in the House of Lords, it was unanimously resolved there should be no crowd of unnecessary auditors; consequently the fair sex were excluded, and the gallery destined to the sole use of the House of Commons. Notwithstanding which determination, a tribe of dames resolved to show on this occasion that neither men nor laws could resist them. These heroines were Lady Huntingdon, the Duchess of Queensberry, the Duchess of Ancaster, Lady Westmoreland, Lady Cobham, Lady Charlotte Edwin, Lady Archibald Hamilton and her daughter, Mrs. Scott, and Mrs. Pendarves, and Lady Frances Saunderson. I am thus particular in their names, since I look upon them to be the boldest assertors, and most resigned sufferers for liberty, I ever read of. They presented themselves at the door at nine o'clock in the morning, where Sir William Saunderson respectfully informed them the Chancellor had made an order against their admittance. The Duchess of Queensberry, as head of the squadron, pushed at the ill-breeding of a mere lawyer, and desired him to let them upstairs privately. After some modest refusals, he swore by G— he would not let them in. Her Grace, with a noble warmth, answered, by G— they would come in, in spite of the Chancellor and the whole House. This being reported, the Peers resolved to starve them out; an order was made that the doors should not be opened until they had raised their siege. These Amazons now showed themselves qualified for the duty even of foot-soldiers; they stood there till five in the afternoon, every now and then playing volleys of thumps, kicks, and raps against the door, with so much violence that the speakers in the House were scarce heard. When the Lords were not to be conquered by this, the two duchesses (very well apprised of the use of stratagems in war) commanded a dead silence of half an hour; and the Chancellor, who thought this a certain proof of their absence — the Commons also being very impatient to enter — gave order for



the opening of the door; upon which they all rushed in, pushed aside their competitors, and placed themselves in the front rows of the gallery. They stayed there till after eleven, when the House rose; and during the debate gave applause, and showed marks of dislike, not only by smiles and winks (which have always been allowed in these cases), but by noisy laughs and apparent contempts,—which is supposed the true reason why poor Lord Hervey spoke miserably. I beg your pardon, dear madam, for this long relation; but 't is impossible to be short on so copious a subject; and you must own this action very well worthy of record, and I think not to be paralleled in history, ancient or modern.

## TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE

[1748.]

It is very true, my dear child, we cannot now maintain a family with the product of a flock, though I do not doubt the present sheep afford as much wool and milk as any of their ancestors, and it is certain our natural wants are not more numerous than formerly; but the world is past its infancy, and will no longer be contented with spoon meat. Time has added great improvements, but those very improvements have introduced a train of artificial necessities. A collective body of men make a gradual progress in understanding, like that of a single individual. When I reflect on the vast increase of useful, as well as speculative, knowledge the last three hundred years has produced, and that the peasants of this age have more conveniences than the first emperors of Rome had any notion of, I imagine we are now arrived at that period which answers to fifteen. I cannot think we are older, when I recollect the many palpable follies which are still (almost) universally persisted in. I place that of war amongst the most glaring, being fully as senseless as the boxing of schoolboys; and whenever we come to man's estate, — perhaps a thousand years hence, — I do not doubt it will appear as ridiculous as the pranks of unlucky lads. Several discoveries will then be made, and several truths made clear, of which we have now no more idea than the ancients had of the circulation of the blood, or the optics of Sir I. Newton.

January 28, 1753.

You have given me a great deal of satisfaction by your account of your eldest daughter. I am particularly pleased to hear she is a good arithmetician; it is the best proof of understanding; the knowledge of numbers is one of the chief distinctions between us and the brutes. . . . Every woman endeavors to breed her daughter a fine lady, qualifying her for a station in which she will never appear, and at the same time incapacitating her for that retirement to which she is destined. Learning, if she has a real taste for it, will not only make her contented, but happy in it. No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting. She will not want new fashions, nor regret the loss of expensive diversions, or variety of company, if she can be amused with an author in her closet. To render this amusement extensive, she should be permitted to learn the languages. I have heard it lamented that boys lose so many years in mere learning of words; this is no objection to a girl, whose time is not so precious; she cannot advance herself in any profession, and has therefore more hours to spare; and as you say her memory is good, she will be very agreeably employed this way. There are two cautions to be given on this subject: first, not to think herself learned when she can read Latin, or even Greek. Languages are more properly to be called vehicles of learning than learning itself, as may be observed in many schoolmasters, who, though perhaps critics in grammar, are the most ignorant fellows upon earth. True knowledge consists in knowing things, not words. I would wish her no further a linguist than to enable her to read books in their originals, that are often corrupted, and always injured, by translations. Two hours' application every morning will bring this about much sooner than you can imagine, and she will have leisure enough besides to run over the English poetry, which is a more important part of a woman's education than it is generally supposed. Many a young damsel has been ruined by a fine copy of verses, which she would have laughed at if she had known it had been stolen from Mr. Waller. I remember, when I was a girl, I saved one of my companions from destruction, who communicated to me an epistle she was quite charmed with. As she had a natural good taste, she observed the lines were not so smooth as Prior's or Pope's, but had more thought and spirit than any of theirs.

She was wonderfully delighted with such a demonstration of her lover's sense and passion, and not a little pleased with her own charms, that had force enough to inspire such elegancies. In the midst of this triumph I showed her that they were taken from Randolph's poems, and the unfortunate transcriber was dismissed with the scorn he deserved. To say truth, the poor plagiarist was very unlucky to fall into my hands; that author, being no longer in fashion, would have escaped any one of less universal reading than myself. You should encourage your daughter to talk over with you what she reads; and, as you are very capable of distinguishing, take care she does not mistake pert folly for wit and humor, or rhyme for poetry, which are the common errors of young people, and have a train of ill consequences. The second caution to be given her (and which is most absolutely necessary) is to conceal whatever learning she attains, with as much solicitude as she would hide crookedness or lameness. The parade of it can only serve to draw on her the envy, and consequently the most inveterate hatred, of all he and she fools, which will certainly be at least three parts in four of all her acquaintance.

March 6, 1753.

I cannot help writing a sort of apology for my last letter, foreseeing that you will think it wrong, or at least Lord Bute will be extremely shocked at the proposal of a learned education for daughters, which the generality of men believe as great a profanation as the clergy would do if the laity should presume to exercise the functions of the priesthood. I desire you would take notice, I would not have learning enjoined them as a task, but permitted as a pleasure, if their genius leads them naturally to it. . . . Whoever will cultivate their own mind will find full employment. Every virtue does not only require great care in the planting, but as much daily solicitude in cherishing, as exotic fruits and flowers. The vices and passions — which I am afraid are the natural product of the soil — demand perpetual weeding. Add to this the search after knowledge, every branch of which is entertaining, and the longest life is too short for the pursuit of it; which, though in some regards confined to very strait limits, leaves still a vast variety of amusements to those capable of tasting them, which is utterly impossible for those blinded by prejudices which are the certain effect of an igno-



rant education. My own was one of the worst in the world, being exactly the same as Clarissa Harlowe's; her pious Mrs. Norton so perfectly resembling my governess, who had been nurse to my mother, I could almost fancy the author was acquainted with her. She took so much pains, from my infancy, to fill my head with superstitious tales and false notions, it was none of her fault I am not at this day afraid of witches and hobgoblins, or turned Methodist. Almost all girls are bred after this manner. I believe you are the only woman (perhaps I might say person) that never was either frightened or cheated into anything by your parents. . . . I could give many examples of ladies whose ill conduct has been very notorious, which has been owing to that ignorance which has exposed them to idleness, which is justly called the mother of mischief. There is nothing so like the education of a woman of quality as that of a prince; they are taught to dance, and the exterior part of what is called good breeding, which, if they attain, they are extraordinary creatures in their kind, and have all the accomplishments required by their directors. The same characters are formed by the same lessons, — which inclines me to think (if I dare say it) that nature has not placed us in an inferior rank to men, no more than the females of other animals, where we see no distinction of capacity.

Lovere, [1755].

I have promised you some remarks on all the books I have received. I believe you would easily forgive my not keeping my word; however, I shall go on. The Rambler is certainly a strong misnomer; he always plods in the beaten road of his predecessors, following the Spectator — with the same pace a pack-horse would do a hunter — in the style that is proper to lengthen a paper. These writers may, perhaps, be of service to the public, which is saying a great deal in their favor. There are numbers of both sexes who never read anything but such productions, and cannot spare time from doing nothing to go through a sixpenny pamphlet. Such gentle readers may be improved by a moral hint which, though repeated over and over from generation to generation, they never heard in their lives. I should be glad to know the name of this laborious author. H. Fielding has given a true picture of himself and his first wife in the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Booth,<sup>1</sup> some compliments to his own figure ex-

<sup>1</sup> In *Amelia*.

cepted; and I am persuaded several of the incidents he mentions are real matters of fact. I wonder he does not perceive Tom Jones and Mr. Booth are sorry scoundrels. All these sort of books have the same fault, which I cannot easily pardon, being very mischievous. They place a merit in extravagant passions, and encourage young people to hope for impossible events, to draw them out of the misery they chose to plunge themselves into, expecting legacies from unknown relations, and generous benefactors to distressed virtue, as much out of nature as fairy treasures. Fielding has really a fund of true humor, and was to be pitied at his first entrance into the world having no choice, as he said himself, but to be a hackney writer or a hackney coachman. His genius deserved a better fate; but I cannot help blaming that continued indiscretion, to give it the softest name, that has run through his life, and I am afraid still remains. . . . The general want of invention which reigns among our writers inclines me to think it is not the natural growth of our island, which has not sun enough to warm the imagination. The press is loaded by the servile flock of imitators. . . . Since I was born, no original has appeared excepting Congreve, and Fielding, who would, I believe, have approached nearer to his excellences, if not forced by necessity to publish without correction, and throw many productions into the world he would have thrown into the fire, if meat could have been got without money, or money without scribbling. The greatest virtue, justice, and the most distinguishing prerogative of mankind, writing, when duly executed, do honor to human nature; but when degenerated into trades, are the most contemptible ways of getting bread.

September 22, 1755.

. . . I am sorry for H. Fielding's death, not only as I shall read no more of his writings, but I believe he lost more than others, as no man enjoyed life more than he did. . . . There was a great similitude between his character and that of Sir Richard Steele. He had the advantage both in learning and—in my opinion—genius; they both agreed in wanting money in spite of all their friends, and would have wanted it, if their hereditary lands had been as extensive as their imagination; yet each of them was so formed for happiness, it is pity he was not immortal.

ALEXANDER POPE  
PREFACE TO SHAKESPEARE

1725

[This Preface was written for Pope's edition of Shakespeare, — the second of the eighteenth-century editions. The extract is chiefly from the first part, beginning with the third paragraph. With the concluding paragraph, which well represents the judgment of Shakespeare held at this period, compare the simile in Johnson's Preface, page 385, below.]

. . . If ever any author deserved the name of an original, it was Shakespeare. Homer himself drew not his art so immediately from the fountains of Nature; it proceeded through Egyptian strainers and channels, and came to him not without some tincture of the learning, or some cast of the models, of those before him. The poetry of Shakespeare was inspiration indeed: he is not so much an imitator, as an instrument, of Nature; and 'tis not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks through him.

His characters are so much Nature herself, that 'tis a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her. Those of other poets have a constant resemblance, which shows that they received them from one another, and were but multipliers of the same image: each picture, like a mock rainbow, is but the reflection of a reflection. But every single character in Shakespeare is as much an individual as those in life itself; it is as impossible to find any two alike; and such as from their relation or affinity appear in any respect most to be twins, will upon comparison be found remarkably distinct. To this life and variety of character we must add the wonderful preservation of it, which is such, throughout his plays, that had all the speeches been printed without the very names of the persons, I believe one might have applied them with certainty to every speaker.

The power over our passions was never possessed in a more eminent degree, or displayed in so different instances. Yet all along there is seen no labor, no pains to raise them; no preparation to guide our guess to the effect, or be perceived to lead



toward it; but the heart swells, and the tears burst out, just at the proper places. We are surprised the moment we weep, and yet upon reflection find the passion so just, that we should be surprised if we had not wept, and wept at that very moment.

How astonishing is it, again, that the passions directly opposite to these, laughter and spleen, are no less at his command! that he is not more a master of the great than of the ridiculous in human nature; of our noblest tendernesses than of our vainest foibles; of our strongest emotions than of our idlest sensations!

Nor does he only excel in the passions. In the coolness of reflection and reasoning he is full as admirable. His sentiments are not only in general the most pertinent and judicious upon every subject, but, by a talent very peculiar, something between penetration and felicity, he hits upon that particular point on which the bent of each argument turns, or the force of each motive depends. This is perfectly amazing, from a man of no education or experience in those great and public scenes of life which are usually the subject of his thoughts; so that he seems to have known the world by intuition, to have looked through human nature at one glance, and to be the only author that gives ground for a very new opinion: that the philosopher, and even the man of the world, may be born, as well as the poet.

It must be owned that with all these great excellencies he has almost as great defects; and that as he has certainly written better, so he has perhaps written worse, than any other. But I think I can in some measure account for these defects, from several causes and accidents, without which it is hard to imagine that so large and so enlightened a mind could ever have been susceptible of them. That all these contingencies should unite to his disadvantage seems to me almost as singularly unlucky, as that so many various (nay contrary) talents should meet in one man was happy and extraordinary.

It must be allowed that stage poetry, of all other, is more particularly leveled to please the populace, and its success more immediately depending upon the common suffrage. One cannot therefore wonder if Shakespeare, having at his first appearance no other aim in his writings than to procure a subsistence, directed his endeavors solely to hit the taste and humor that then prevailed. The audience was generally composed of the meaner

sort of people, and therefore the images of life were to be drawn from those of their own rank; accordingly we find that not only our author's, but almost all the old comedies, have their scene among tradesmen and mechanics, and even their historical plays strictly follow the common old stories or vulgar traditions of that kind of people. In tragedy nothing was so sure to surprise and cause admiration, as the most strange, unexpected, and consequently most unnatural, events and incidents, the most exaggerated thoughts, the most verbose and bombast expression, the most pompous rhymes and thundering versification. In comedy nothing was so sure to please as mean buffoonery, vile ribaldry, and unmannerly jests of fools and clowns. Yet even in these our author's wit buoys up and is borne above his subject. His genius in those low parts is like some prince of a romance, in the disguise of a shepherd or peasant; a certain greatness and spirit now and then break out, which manifest his higher extraction and qualities.

It may be added that not only the common audience had no notion of the rules of writing, but few even of the better sort piqued themselves upon any great degree of knowledge or nicety that way, till Ben Jonson, getting possession of the stage, brought critical learning into vogue. And that this was not done without difficulty may appear from those frequent lessons (and indeed almost declamations) which he was forced to prefix to his first plays, and put into the mouth of his actors, the *Grex*, *Chorus*, etc., to remove the prejudices and inform the judgment of his hearers. Till then, our authors had no thoughts of writing on the model of the ancients; their tragedies were only histories in dialogue, and their comedies followed the thread of any novel as they found it, no less implicitly than if it had been true history.

To judge, therefore, of Shakespeare by Aristotle's rules, is like trying a man by the laws of one country who acted under those of another. He writ to the people, and writ at first without patronage from the better sort, and therefore without aims of pleasing them; without assistance or advice from the learned, as without the advantage of education or acquaintance among them; without that knowledge of the best models, the ancients, to inspire him with an emulation of them; in a word, without any views of reputation, and of what poets are pleased to call

immortality; some or all of which have encouraged the vanity or animated the ambition of other writers.

Yet it must be observed that, when his performances had merited the protection of his Prince, and when the encouragement of the court had succeeded to that of the town, the works of his riper years are manifestly raised above those of his former. The dates of his plays sufficiently evidence that his productions improved in proportion to the respect he had for his auditors. And I make no doubt this observation will be found true in every instance, were but editions extant from which we might learn the exact time when every piece was composed, and whether writ for the town or the court.

Another cause, and no less strong than the former, may be deduced from our author's being a player, and forming himself first upon the judgments of that body of men whereof he was a member. They have ever had a standard to themselves, upon other principles than those of Aristotle. As they live by the majority, they know no rule but that of pleasing the present humor, and complying with the wit in fashion, a consideration which brings all their judgment to a short point. Players are just such judges of what is right, as tailors are of what is graceful. And in this view it will be but fair to allow that most of our author's faults are less to be ascribed to his wrong judgment as a poet, than to his right judgment as a player. . . .

I will conclude by saying of Shakespeare that, with all his faults, and with all the irregularity of his drama, one may look upon his works, in comparison of those that are more finished and regular, as upon an ancient majestic piece of Gothic architecture, compared with a neat modern building. The latter is more elegant and glaring, but the former is more strong and more solemn. It must be allowed that in one of these there are materials enough to make many of the other. It has much the greater variety, and much the nobler apartments, though we are often conducted to them by dark, odd, and uncouth passages. Nor does the whole fail to strike us with greater reverence, though many of the parts are childish, ill-placed, and unequal to its grandeur.



## COLLEY CIBBER

### AN APOLOGY FOR THE LIFE OF COLLEY CIBBER

1740

[The *Apology* was written after Cibber's retirement from active work on the stage in 1733, and published in his seventieth year. The extracts are from chapters VIII and XIV.]

#### [THEATRICAL REFORM]

OUR theatrical writers were not only accused of immorality, but profaneness; many flagrant instances of which were collected and published by a nonjuring clergyman, Jeremy Collier, in his *View of the Stage*, etc., about the year 1697. However just his charge against the authors that then wrote for it might be, I cannot but think his sentence against the stage itself is unequal; reformation he thinks too mild a treatment for it, and is therefore for laying his axe to the root of it. If this were to be a rule of judgment for offenses of the same nature, what might become of the pulpit, where many a seditious and corrupted teacher has been known to cover the most pernicious doctrine with the mask of religion? This puts me in mind of what the noted Jo. Hains, the comedian, a fellow of a wicked wit, said upon this occasion; who being asked what could transport Mr. Collier into so blind a zeal for a general suppression of the stage, when only some particular authors had abused it, whereas the stage, he could not but know, was generally allowed, when rightly conducted, to be a delightful method of mending our morals, — “For that reason,” replied Hains; “Collier is by profession a moral-mender himself, and two of a trade, you know, can never agree.”

The authors of *The Old Bachelor* and of *The Relapse*<sup>1</sup> were those whom Collier most labored to convict of immorality, to which they severally published their reply. The first seemed too much hurt to be able to defend himself, and the other felt him so little that his wit only laughed at his lashes.

<sup>1</sup> Congreve and Vanbrugh.

My first play of *The Fool in Fashion*, too, being then in a course of success, perhaps for that reason only this severe author thought himself obliged to attack it; in which, I hope, he has shown more zeal than justice. His greatest charge against it is that it sometimes uses the word "Faith" as an oath, in the dialogue. But if Faith may as well signify our given word, or credit, as our religious belief, why might not his charity have taken it in the less criminal sense? Nevertheless, Mr. Collier's book was upon the whole thought so laudable a work that King William, soon after it was published, granted him a *nolo prosequi*, when he stood answerable to the law for his having absolved two criminals, just before they were executed for high treason. And it must be farther granted that his calling our dramatic writers to this strict account had a very wholesome effect upon those who writ after this time. They were now a great deal more upon their guard; indecencies were no longer writ; and by degrees the fair sex came to fill the boxes on the first day of a new comedy, without fear or censure. But the Master of the Revels, who then licensed all plays for the stage, assisted this reformation with a more zealous severity than ever. He would strike out whole scenes of a vicious or immoral character, though it were visibly shown to be reformed or punished. A severe instance of this kind falling upon myself may be an excuse for my relating it. When *Richard the Third*, as I altered it from Shakespeare, came from his hands to the stage, he expunged the whole first act, without sparing a line of it. This extraordinary stroke of a *Sic volo* occasioned my applying to him for the small indulgence of a speech or two, that the other four acts might limp on with a little less absurdity. No! he had not leisure to consider what might be separately inoffensive. He had an objection to the whole act, and the reason he gave for it was, that the distresses of King Henry the Sixth, who is killed by Richard in the first act, would put weak people too much in mind of King James, then living in France; — a notable proof of his zeal for the government! Those who have read either the play or the history, I dare say, will think he strained hard for the parallel. In a word, we were forced for some few years to let the play take its fate, with only four acts, divided into five; by the loss of so considerable a limb may one not modestly suppose it was robbed of at least a fifth part of that favor it afterwards met

with? For though this first act was at last recovered, and made the play whole again, yet the relief came too late to repay me for the pains I had taken in it. Nor did I ever hear that this zealous severity of the Master of the Revels was afterwards thought justifiable. . . .

[ADDISON'S "CATO"]

From this time to the year 1712, my memory (from which repository alone, every article of what I write is collected) has nothing worth mentioning, till the first acting of the tragedy of *Cato*. As to the play itself, it might be enough to say that the author and the actors had their different hopes of fame and profit amply answered by the performance; but as its success was attended with remarkable consequences, it may not be amiss to trace it from its several years' concealment in the closet to the stage.

In 1703, nine years before it was acted, I had the pleasure of reading the first four acts (which was all of it then written) privately with Sir Richard Steele. It may be needless to say it was impossible to lay them out of my hand till I had gone through them, or to dwell upon the delight his friendship to the author received, upon my being so warmly pleased with them. But my satisfaction was as highly disappointed, when he told me, whatever spirit Mr. Addison had shown in his writing it, he doubted he would never have courage enough to let his *Cato* stand the censure of an English audience; that it had only been the amusement of his leisure hours in Italy, and was never intended for the stage. This poetical diffidence Sir Richard himself spoke of with some concern, and in the transport of his imagination could not help saying, "Good God! what a part would Betterton make of Cato!" But this was seven years before Betterton died, and when Booth — who afterwards made his fortune by acting it — was in his theatrical minority.

In the latter end of Queen Anne's reign, when our national politics had changed hands, the friends of Mr. Addison then thought it a proper time to animate the public with the sentiments of *Cato*. In a word, their importunities were too warm to be resisted, and it was no sooner finished than hurried to the stage, in April, 1712, at a time when three days a week were usually appointed for the benefit plays of particular actors.



But a work of that critical importance was to make its way through all private considerations; nor could it possibly give place to a custom which the breach of could very little prejudice the benefits, that on so unavoidable an occasion were (in part, though not wholly) postponed. It was therefore (Mondays excepted) acted every day for a month to constantly crowded houses. As the author had made us a present of whatever profits he might have claimed from it, we thought ourselves obliged to spare no cost in the proper decorations of it. Its coming so late in the season to the stage proved of particular advantage to the sharing actors, because the harvest of our annual gains was generally over before the middle of March, many select audiences being then usually reserved in favor to the benefits of private actors, which fixed engagements naturally abated the receipts of the days before and after them; but this unexpected after-crop of *Cato* largely supplied to us those deficiencies, and was almost equal to two fruitful seasons in the same year; at the close of which the three managing actors found themselves each a gainer of thirteen hundred and fifty pounds.

But to return to the first reception of this play from the public. Although *Cato* seems plainly written upon what are called Whig principles, yet the Tories of that time had sense enough not to take it as the least reflection upon their administration; but, on the contrary, they seemed to brandish and vaunt their approbation of every sentiment in favor of liberty, which by a public act of their generosity was carried so high, that one day while the play was acting they collected fifty guineas in the boxes, and made a present of them to Booth, with this compliment: "For his honest opposition to a perpetual dictator, and his dying so bravely in the cause of liberty." . . .

## HENRY ST. JOHN, VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE

[Bolingbroke's writings, as published during his lifetime, were chiefly political; but his notes and essays on philosophy and religion were well known in MS. (several of them being written for Pope and used by him, as in the *Essay on Man*). The essays here represented were published by Mallet after the author's death, the "Use of Retirement" in the same book with "A Plan for a General History" and "Reflections on Exile," the Letter to Pope with "A Letter to Sir W. Wyndham" and "Reflections on the State of the Nation." The extracts well represent certain aspects of eighteenth-century deism; e. g., the curious fashion in which its spokesmen attacked the established faith and organization of the church, while disclaiming any desire to abolish or supplant it.]

### OF THE TRUE USE OF RETIREMENT AND STUDY

1752

. . . . THERE is a strange distrust of human reason in every human institution. This distrust is so apparent that an habitual submission to some authority or other is forming in us from our cradles; that principles of reasoning, and matters of fact, are inculcated in our tender minds, before we are able to exercise that reason; and that, when we are able to exercise it, we are either forbid, or frightened from doing so, even on things that are themselves the proper objects of reason, or that are delivered to us upon an authority whose sufficiency or insufficiency is so most evidently.

On many subjects, such as the general laws of natural religion, and the general rules of society and good policy, men of all countries and languages, who cultivate their reason, judge alike. The same premises have led them to the same conclusions, and so, following the same guide, they have trod in the same path. At least the differences are small, easily reconciled, and such as could not of themselves contradistinguish nation from nation, religion from religion, and sect from sect. How comes it, then, that there are other points on which the most opposite opinions are entertained, and some of these with so much heat and fury

that the men on one side of the hedge will die for the affirmative, and the men on the other for the negative? . . . Look narrowly into it, and you will find that the points agreed on, and the points disputed, are not proportionable to the common sense and general reason of mankind. Nature and truth are the same everywhere, and reason shows them everywhere alike. But the accidental and other causes, which give rise and growth to opinions, both in speculation and practice, are of infinite variety; and wherever these opinions are once confirmed by custom and propagated by education, various, inconsistent, contradictory as they are, they all pretend (and all their pretences are backed by pride, by passion, and by interest) to have reason, or revelation, or both, on their side; though neither reason nor revelation can be possibly on the side of more than one and may be possibly on the side of none.

Thus it happens that the people of Thibet are Tartars and idolaters, that they are Turks and Mahometans at Constantinople, Italians and Papists at Rome; and how much soever education may be less confined, and the means of knowledge more attainable, in France and our own country, yet thus it happens in great measure that Frenchmen and Roman Catholics are bred at Paris, and Englishmen and Protestants at London. For men, indeed, properly speaking, are bred nowhere; every one thinks the system, as he speaks the language, of his country. At least there are few that think, and none that act, in any country, according to the dictates of pure unbiassed reason; unless they may be said to do so, when reason directs them to speak and act according to the system of their country or sect, at the same time as she leads them to think according to that of nature and truth.

Thus the far greatest part of mankind appears reduced to a lower state than other animals, in that very respect on account of which we claim so great superiority over them; because instinct, that has its due effect, is preferable to reason that has not. I suppose in this place, with philosophers and the vulgar, that which I am in no wise ready to affirm — that other animals have no share of human reason; for, let me say by the way, it is much more likely other animals should share the human, than that man should share the divine reason, which is affirmed. But, supposing our monopoly of reason, would not your Lord



ship choose to walk upon four legs, to wear a long tail, and to be called a beast, with the advantage of being determined by irresistible and unerring instinct to those truths that are necessary to your well-being, rather than to walk on two legs, to wear no tail, and to be honored with the title of man, at the expense of deviating from them perpetually? Instinct acts spontaneously whenever its action is necessary, and directs the animal according to the purpose for which it was implanted in him. Reason is a nobler and more extensive faculty, for it extends to the unnecessary as well as to the necessary, and to satisfy our curiosity as well as our wants; but reason must be excited, or she will remain inactive. She must be left free, or she will conduct us wrong, and carry us farther astray from her own precincts than we should go without her help. In the first case we have no sufficient guide; and in the second, the more we employ our reason the more unreasonable we are.

Now if all this be so, if reason has so little, and ignorance, passion, interest, and custom so much to do, in forming our opinions and our habits, and in directing the whole conduct of human life, is it not a thing desirable by every thinking man, to have the opportunity, indulged to so few by the course of accidents, — the opportunity *secum esse, et secum vivere*, of living some years, at least, to ourselves and for ourselves, in a state of freedom, under the laws of reason, instead of passing our whole time in a state of vassalage under those of authority and custom? Is it not worth our while to contemplate ourselves, and others, and all the things of this world, once before we leave them, through the medium of pure, and — if I may say so — undefiled reason? Is it not worth our while to approve or condemn, on our own authority, what we receive in the beginning of life on the authority of other men, who were not then better able to judge for us than we are now to judge for ourselves?

All men are taught their opinions, at least on the most important subjects, by rote, and are bred to defend them with obstinacy. They may be taught true opinions; but whether true or false, the same zeal for them, and the same attachment to them, is everywhere inspired alike. The Tartar believes as heartily that the soul of Foe inhabits in his Dairo, as the Christian believes the hypostatic union, or any article in the Athanasian Creed. Now this may answer the ends of society in some

respects, and do well enough for the vulgar of all ranks; but it is not enough for the man who cultivates his reason, who is able to think, and who ought to think, for himself. To such a man, every opinion that he has not himself framed, or examined strictly, and then adopted, will pass for nothing more than what it really is, — the opinion of other men, which may be true or false, for aught he knows. And this is a state of uncertainty in which no such man can remain, with any peace of mind, concerning those things that are of greatest importance to us here, and may be so hereafter. He will make them, therefore, the objects of his first and greatest attention. If he has lost time, he will lose no more. And when he has acquired all the knowledge he is capable of acquiring on these subjects, he will be the less concerned whether he has time to acquire any farther. Should he have passed his life in the pleasures or business of the world, whenever he sets about this work, he will soon have the advantage over the learned philosopher. For he will soon have secured what is necessary to his happiness, and may sit down in the peaceful enjoyment of that knowledge, or proceed with greater advantage and satisfaction to the acquisition of new knowledge; whilst the other continues his search after things that are in their nature — to say the best of them — hypothetical, precarious, and superfluous. . . .

In short, my lord, he who retires from the world with a resolution of employing his leisure in the first place to re-examine and settle his opinions, is inexcusable if he does not begin with those that are most important to him, and if he does not deal honestly by himself. To deal honestly by himself, he must observe the rule I have insisted upon, and not suffer the delusions of the world to follow him into his retreat. Every man's reason is every man's oracle; this oracle is best consulted in the silence of retirement; and when we have so consulted, whatever the decision be, whether in favor of our prejudices or against them, we must rest satisfied, since nothing can be more certain than this, that he who follows that guide in the search of truth, as that was given him to lead him to it, will have a much better plea to make, whenever or wherever he may be called to account, than he who has resigned himself, either deliberately or inadvertently, to any authority upon earth.

When we have done this, concerning God, ourselves, and

other men, — concerning the relations in which we stand to Him and to them, — the duties that result from these relations, — and the positive will of the Supreme Being, whether revealed to us in a supernatural, or discovered by the right use of our reason in a natural way, — we have done the great business of our lives. Our lives are so sufficient for this, that they afford us time for more, even when we begin late; especially if we proceed in every other inquiry by the same rule. To discover error in axioms, or in first principles grounded on facts, is like the breaking of a charm. The enchanted castle, the steep rock, the burning lake disappear; and the paths that lead to truth, which we imagined to be so long, so embarrassed, and so difficult, show as they are, — short, open, and easy. . . .

## A LETTER ADDRESSED TO ALEXANDER POPE ESQ.

1753

. . . To be contented to know things as God has made us capable of knowing them, is then a first principle necessary to secure us from falling into error; and if there is any subject upon which we should be most on our guard against error, it is surely that which I have called here the First Philosophy. God is hid from us in the majesty of His nature, and the little we discover of Him must be discovered by the light that is reflected from His works. Out of this light, therefore, we should never go in our inquiries and reasonings about His nature, His attributes, and the order of His providence. And yet upon these subjects men depart the furthest from it; nay, they who depart the furthest are the best heard by the bulk of mankind. The less men know, the more they believe that they know. Belief passes in their minds for knowledge, and the very circumstances which should beget doubt produce increase of faith. Every glittering apparition that is pointed out to them in the vast wild of imagination, passes for a reality; and the more distant, the more confused, the more incomprehensible it is, the more sublime it is esteemed. He who should attempt to shift these scenes of airy vision for those of real knowledge might expect to be treated with scorn and anger by the whole theological and metaphysical tribe, the



masters and the scholars. He would be despised as a plebeian philosopher, and railed at as an infidel. It would be sounded high that he debased human nature, which has a cognation — so the Reverend and learned Doctor Cudworth calls it — with the divine; — that the soul of man, immaterial and immortal by its nature, was made to contemplate higher and nobler objects than this sensible world, and even than itself, since it was made to contemplate God, and to be united to Him. In such clamor as this, the voice of truth and reason would be drowned; and, with both of them on his side, he who opposed it would make many enemies and few converts. . . . Prudence forbids me, therefore, to write as I think to the world, whilst friendship forbids me to write otherwise to you. I have been a martyr of faction in politics, and have no vocation to be so in philosophy.

. . . If the religion we profess contained nothing more than articles of faith and points of doctrine clearly revealed to us in the Gospel, we might be obliged to renounce our natural freedom of thought in favor of this supernatural authority. But since it is notorious that a certain order of men, who call themselves the Church, have been employed to make and propagate a theological system of their own, which they call Christianity, from the days of the apostles, and even from these days inclusively, it is our duty to examine and analyze the whole, that we may distinguish what is divine from what is human, — adhere to the first simplicity, and ascribe to the last no more authority than the word of man deserves. . . .

I neither expect nor desire to see any public revision made of the present system of Christianity. I should fear an attempt to alter the established religion as much as they who have the most bigot attachment to it, and for reasons as good as theirs, though not entirely the same. I speak only of the duty of every private man to examine for himself, which would have an immediate good effect relatively to himself, and might have in time a good effect relatively to the public, since it would dispose the minds of men to a greater indifference about theological disputes, which are the disgrace of Christianity and have been the plagues of the world. . . . He who examines on such principles as these, which are conformable to truth and reason, may lay aside at once the immense volumes of fathers and

councils, of schoolmen, casuists, and controversial writers, which have perplexed the world so long. Natural religion will be to such a man no longer intricate; revealed religion will be no longer mysterious, nor the word of God equivocal. Clearness and precision are two great excellences of human laws; how much more should we expect to find them in the law of God? They have been banished from thence by artificial theology; and he who is desirous to find them must banish the professors of it from his counsels, instead of consulting them. He must seek for genuine Christianity with that simplicity of spirit with which it is taught in the Gospel by Christ himself. . . .

I cannot conclude my discourse on this occasion better than by putting you in mind of a passage you quoted to me once, with great applause, from a sermon of Foster, and to this effect: "Where mystery begins, religion ends." The apophthegm pleased me much, and I was glad to hear such a truth from any pulpit, since it shows an inclination, at least, to purify Christianity from the leaven of artificial theology, which consists principally in making things that are very plain mysterious, and in pretending to make things that are impenetrably mysterious very plain. If you continue still of the same mind, I shall have no excuse to make to you for what I have written, and shall write. Our opinions coincide. If you have changed your mind, think again, and examine further. You will find that it is the modest, not the presumptuous, inquirer, who makes a real and safe progress in the discovery of divine truths. One follows nature and nature's God; that is, he follows God in His works and in His word, nor presumes to go further, by metaphysical and theological commentaries of his own invention, than the two texts, if I may use this expression, carry him very evidently. They who have done otherwise, and have affected to discover, by a supposed science derived from tradition, or taught in the schools, more than they who have not such science can discover, concerning the nature, moral and physical, of the Supreme Being, and concerning the secrets of His providence, have been either enthusiasts or knaves, — or else of that numerous tribe who reason well very often, but reason always on some arbitrary assumption. Much of this character belonged to the heathen divines; and it is, in all its parts, peculiarly that of the ancient fathers and modern doctors of the Christian Church. . . . All

these men, both heathens and Christians, appeared gigantic forms through the false medium of imagination and habitual prejudice, but were, in truth, as arrant dwarfs in the knowledge to which they pretended, as you and I and all the sons of Adam. The former, however, deserved some excuse; the latter none. . . .



SAMUEL RICHARDSON  
THE HISTORY OF CLARISSA HARLOWE  
1747-48

PREFACE

THE following history is given in a series of letters, written principally in a double yet separate correspondence, between two young ladies of virtue and honor, bearing an inviolable friendship for each other, and writing not merely for amusement, but upon the most interesting subjects, in which every private family, more or less, may find itself concerned; and between two gentlemen of free lives, one of them glorying in his talents for stratagem and invention, and communicating to the other, in confidence, all the secret purposes of an intriguing head and resolute heart. But here it will be proper to observe, for the sake of such as may apprehend hurt to the morals of youth from the more freely written letters, that the gentlemen, though professed libertines as to the female sex, and making it one of their wicked maxims to keep no faith with any of the individuals of it who are thrown into their power, are not, however, either infidels or scoffers, nor yet such as think themselves freed from the observance of those other moral duties which bind man to man. On the contrary, it will be found in the progress of the work that they very often make such reflections upon each other, and each upon himself and his own actions, as reasonable beings must make, who disbelieve not a future state of rewards and punishments, and who one day propose to reform,—one of them actually reforming, and by that means giving an opportunity to censure the freedoms which fall from the gayer pen and lighter heart of the other. And yet that other, although, in unbosoming himself to a select friend, he discover wickedness enough to entitle him to general detestation, preserves a decency, as well in his images as in his language, which is not always to be found in the works of some of the most celebrated modern writers, whose subjects and characters have less warranted the liberties they have taken.

In the letters of the two young ladies, it is presumed will be found not only the highest exercise of a reasonable and practicable friendship, between minds endowed with the noblest principles of virtue and religion, but occasionally interspersed such delicacy of sentiments, particularly with regard to the other sex, — such instances of impartiality, each freely, as a fundamental principle of their friendship, blaming, praising, and setting right the other, — as are strongly to be recommended to the observation of the younger part (more specially) of female readers.

The principal of these two young ladies is proposed as an exemplar to her sex. Nor is it any objection to her being so, that she is not in all respects a perfect character. It was not only natural, but it was necessary, that she should have some faults, were it only to show the reader how laudably she could mistrust and blame herself, and carry to her own heart, divested of self-partiality, the censure which arose from her own convictions, and that even to the acquittal of those, because revered characters, whom no one else would acquit, and to whose much greater faults her errors were owing, and not to a weak or reproachable heart. As far as is consistent with human frailty, and as far as she could be perfect, considering the people she had to deal with, and those with whom she was inseparably connected, she *is* perfect. To have been impeccable must have left nothing for the Divine Grace and a purified state to do, and carried our idea of her from woman to angel. As such is she often esteemed by the man whose heart was so corrupt that he could hardly believe human nature capable of the purity which, on every trial or temptation, shone out in hers.

Besides the four principal persons, several others are introduced, whose letters are characteristic; and it is presumed that there will be found in some of them — but more especially in those of the chief character among the men, and the second character among the women — such strokes of gayety, fancy, and humor, as will entertain and divert, and at the same time both warn and instruct.

All the letters are written while the hearts of the writers must be supposed to be wholly engaged in their subjects (the events at the time generally dubious); so that they abound not only with critical situations, but with what may be called instan-

taneous descriptions and reflections, proper to be brought home to the breast of the youthful reader; as also with affecting conversations, many of them written in the dialogue or dramatic way. "Much more lively and affecting," says one of the principal characters, "must be the style of those who write in the height of a present distress, the mind tortured by the pangs of uncertainty, — the events then hidden in the womb of fate, — than the dry, narrative, unanimated style of a person relating difficulties and dangers surmounted, can be, — the relater perfectly at ease, and, if himself unmoved by his own story, not likely greatly to affect the reader."

What will be found to be more particularly aimed at in the following work is, — to warn the inconsiderate and thoughtless of the one sex, against the base arts and designs of specious contrivers of the other, — to caution parents against the undue exercise of their natural authority over their children in the great article of marriage, — to warn children against preferring a man of pleasure to a man of probity upon that dangerous but too commonly received notion that "a reformed rake makes the best husband," — but, above all, to investigate the highest and most important doctrines not only of morality but of Christianity, by showing them thrown into action in the conduct of the worthy characters, while the unworthy, who set those doctrines at defiance, are condignly, and, as may be said, consequentially punished.

From what has been said, considerate readers will not enter upon the perusal of the piece before them as if it were designed *only* to divert and amuse. It will probably be thought tedious to all such as dip into it, expecting a light novel, or transitory romance, and look upon story in it (interesting as that is generally allowed to be) as its sole end, rather than as a vehicle to the instruction. . . .

[THE DEATH OF CLARISSA]

*Mr. Belford to Robert Lovelace, Esq.*

I may as well try to write; since, were I to go to bed, I shall not sleep. I never had such a weight of grief upon my mind in my life, as upon the demise of this admirable woman, whose soul is now rejoicing in the regions of light. You may be glad to know the particulars of her happy exit. I will try to proceed,



for all is hush and still, — the family retired, but not one of them, and least of all her poor cousin, I dare say, to rest. At four o'clock, as I mentioned in my last, I was sent for down, and as thou usedst to like my descriptions, I will give thee the woful scene that presented itself to me as I approached the bed. The Colonel was the first that took my attention, kneeling on the side of the bed, the lady's right hand in both his, which his face covered, bathing it with his tears; although she had been comforting him, as the women since told me, in elevated strains but broken accents.

On the other side of the bed sat the good widow, her face overwhelmed with tears, leaning her head against the bed's head in a most disconsolate manner; and, turning her face to me as soon as she saw me, "O Mr. Belford!" cried she, with folded hands, "the dear lady — " A heavy sob permitted her not to say more. Mrs. Smith, with clasped fingers and uplifted eyes, as if imploring help from the only Power which could give it, was kneeling down at the bed's feet, tears in large drops trickling down her cheeks. Her nurse was kneeling between the widow and Mrs. Smith, her arms extended. In one hand she held an ineffectual cordial, which she had just been offering to her dying mistress. Her face was swollen with weeping, though used to such scenes as this, and she turned her eyes towards me, as if she called upon me by them to join in the helpless sorrow, — a fresh stream bursting from them as I approached the bed.

The maid of the house, with her face upon her folded arms, as she stood leaning against the wainscot, more audibly expressed her grief than any of the others. The lady had been silent a few minutes, and speechless, as they thought, moving her lips without uttering a word; one hand, as I said, in her cousin's. But when Mrs. Lovick, on my approach, pronounced my name, "O Mr. Belford!" said she, with a faint inward voice, but very distinct nevertheless, "now — now" (in broken periods she spoke) "I bless God for his mercies to his poor creature. All will soon be over — a few — a very few moments — will end this strife — and I shall be happy! Comfort here, sir" (turning her head to the Colonel), "comfort my cousin — see! the blame — able kindness — he would not wish me to be happy — so soon!" Here she stopped for two or three minutes, earnestly looking upon him. Then, resuming, "My dearest

cousin," said she, "be comforted. What is dying but the common lot? The mortal frame may seem to labor — but that is all! It is not so hard to die as I believed it to be! The preparation is the difficulty — I bless God I have had time for that — the rest is worse to beholders than to me — I am all blessed hope — hope itself." She looked what she said, a sweet smile beaming over her countenance.

After a short silence, "Once more, my dear cousin," said she, but still in broken accents, "commend me most dutifully to my father and mother." There she stopped; and then, proceeding, "To my sister, to my brother, to my uncles; and tell them I bless them with my parting breath — for all their goodness to me — even for their displeasure, I bless them — most happy has been to me my punishment *here!* Happy indeed!" She was silent for a few moments, lifting up her eyes, and the hand her cousin held not between his. Then "O Death," said she, "where is thy sting!" (the words I remember to have heard in the burial service read over my uncle and poor Belton); and, after a pause, "It is good for me that I was afflicted!" Words of Scripture, I suppose. Then, turning towards us, who were lost in speechless sorrow, "O dear, dear gentlemen," said she, "you know not what foretastes — what assurances — " And there she again stopped, and looked up, as if in a thankful rapture, sweetly smiling. Then, turning her head towards me, "Do you, sir, tell your friend that I forgive him! And I pray God to forgive him!" Again pausing, and lifting up her eyes, as if praying that He would. "Let him know how happily I die; and that such as my own, I wish to be his last hour." She was again silent for a few moments; and then, resuming, "My sight fails me! Your voices only — " (for we both applauded her Christian, her divine frame, though in accents as broken as her own) "and the voice of grief is alike in all. Is not this Mr. Mordey's hand?" — pressing one of his with that he had just let go. "Which is Mr. Belford's?" — holding out the other. I gave her mine. "God Almighty bless you both!" said she, "and make you both — in your last hour — for you must come to this — happy as I am."

She paused again, her breath growing shorter, and after a few minutes, "And now, my dearest cousin, give me your hand — nearer — still nearer — " drawing it towards her; and she

pressed it with her dying lips. "God protect you, dear, dear sir — and once more receive my best and most grateful thanks — and tell my dear Miss Howe — and vouchsafe to see and to tell my worthy Norton — she will be one day, I fear not, though now lowly in her fortunes, a saint in heaven — tell them both that I remember them with thankful blessings in my last moments! — and pray God to give them happiness here for many, many years, for the sake of their friends and lovers, and a heavenly crown hereafter; and such assurances of it as I have, through the all-satisfying merits of my blessed Redeemer."

Her sweet voice and broken periods methinks still fill my ears, and never will be out of my memory. After a short silence, in a more broken and faint accent — "And you, Mr. Belford," — pressing my hand, "may God preserve you, and make you sensible of all your errors. — You see, in me, how all ends; — may you be —" And down sank her head upon the pillow, she fainting away, and drawing from us her hands. We thought she was then gone, and each gave way to a violent burst of grief. But, soon showing signs of returning life, our attention was again engaged; and I besought her, when a little recovered, to complete in my favor her half-pronounced blessing. She waved her hand to us both, and bowed her head six several times, as we have since recollected, as if distinguishing every person present, not forgetting the nurse and the maid-servant, — the latter having approached the bed, weeping, as if crowding in for the divine lady's last blessing; and she spoke faltering and inwardly — "Bless — bless — bless — you all — and now — and now —" (holding up her almost lifeless hands for the last time) "come — oh come — blessed Lord Jesus!" And with these words, the last but half pronounced, expired; — such a smile, such a charming serenity overspreading her sweet face at the instant, as seemed to manifest her eternal happiness already begun. O Lovelace! — But I can write no more.

I resume my pen to add a few lines.

While warm, though pulseless, we pressed each her hand with our lips, and then retired into the next room. We looked at each other, with intent to speak, but as if one motion governed, as one cause affected both, we turned away silent. The Colonel sighed as if his heart would burst; at last, his face and hands



uplifted, his back towards me, — “Good heaven!” said he to himself. “Support me! And is it thus, O flower of nature!” Then, pausing, “And must we no more — never more! — My blessed, blessed cousin!” — uttering some other words, which his sighs made inarticulate. And then, as if recollecting himself, “Forgive me, sir! Excuse me, Mr. Belford!” And, sliding by me, “Anon I hope to see you, sir.” And down stairs he went, and out of the house, leaving me a statue. When I recovered, I was ready to repine at what I *then* called an unequal dispensation, forgetting her happy preparation, and still happier departure, and that she had but drawn a common lot, triumphing in it, and leaving behind her every one less assured of happiness, though equally certain that the lot would one day be their own. She departed exactly at forty minutes after six o’clock, as by her watch on the table.

And thus died Miss Clarissa Harlowe, in the blossom of her youth and beauty; and who, her tender years considered, has not left behind her her superior in extensive knowledge and watchful prudence, nor hardly her equal for unblemished virtue, exemplary piety, sweetness of manners, discreet generosity, and true Christian charity; and these all set off by the most graceful modesty and humility, yet on all proper occasions manifesting a noble presence of mind, and true magnanimity, so that she may be said to have been not only an ornament to her sex, but to human nature.

## THE HISTORY OF SIR CHARLES GRANDISON, BART.

1753

### PREFACE

THE editor of the following letters takes leave to observe that he has now, in this publication, completed the plan that was the object of his wishes, rather than of his hopes, to accomplish.

The first collection which he published, entitled *Pamela*, exhibited the beauty and superiority of virtue in an innocent and unpolished mind, with the reward which often, even in this life, a protecting Providence bestows on goodness. A young woman of low degree, relating to her honest parents the severe trials she met with from a master who ought to have been the protector,

not the assailer of her honor, shows the character of a libertine in its truly contemptible light. This libertine, however, from the foundation of good principles laid in his early years by an excellent mother, by his passion for a virtuous young woman, and by her amiable example and unwearied patience when she became his wife, is, after a length of time, perfectly reclaimed.

The second collection, published under the title of *Clarissa*, displayed a more melancholy scene. A young lady of higher fortune, and born to happier hopes, is seen involved in such a variety of deep distresses as lead her to an untimely death; affording a warning to parents against forcing the inclinations of their children in the most important article of their lives, and to children against hoping too far from the fairest assurances of a man void of principle. The heroine, however, as a truly Christian heroine, proves superior to her trials, and her heart, always excellent, refined, and exalted by every one of them, rejoices in the approach of a happy eternity. Her cruel destroyer appears wretched and disappointed, even in the boasted success of his vile machinations; but still, buoyed up with self-conceit and vain presumption, he goes on, after every short fit of imperfect, yet terrifying conviction, hardening himself more and more, till, unreclaimed by the most affecting warnings and repeated admonitions, he perishes miserably in the bloom of life, and sinks into the grave, oppressed with guilt, remorse, and horror. His letters, it is hoped, afford many useful lessons to the gay part of mankind, against that misuse of wit and youth, of rank and fortune, and of every outward accomplishment, which turns them into a curse to the miserable possessor as well as to all around him.

Here the editor apprehended he should be obliged to stop, by reason of his precarious state of health, and a variety of avocations which claimed his first attention; but it was insisted on by several of his friends, who were well assured he had the materials in his power, that he should produce into public view the character and actions of a man of *true honor*. He has been enabled to obey these his friends, and to complete his first design; and now, therefore, presents to the public, in *Sir Charles Grandison*, the example of a man acting uniformly well through a variety of trying scenes, because all his actions are regulated by one steady principle. A man of religion and virtue, of liveliness and

spirit, accomplished and agreeable, happy in himself, and a blessing to others.

From what has been premised, it may be supposed that the present collection is not published ultimately, nor even principally, any more than the other two, for the sake of entertainment only. A much nobler end is in view. Yet it is hoped the variety of characters and conversations necessarily introduced into so large a correspondence as these volumes contain, will enliven as well as instruct, — the rather, as the principal correspondents are young ladies of polite education and of lively spirits.

The nature of familiar letters, written, as it were, to the moment, while the heart is agitated by hopes and fears, on events undecided, must plead an excuse for the bulk of a collection of this kind. Mere facts and characters might be comprised in a much smaller compass; but would they be equally interesting? It happens fortunately that an account of the juvenile years of the principal person is narratively given in some of the letters. As many, however, as could be spared have been omitted. There is not one episode in the whole, nor, after Sir Charles Grandison is introduced, one letter inserted, but what tends to illustrate the principal design. . . .

[THE WOOING OF HARRIET]

*Harriet Byron to Lady Grandison*

. . . After some general conversation, which succeeded our playing, Sir Charles drew his chair between my grandmamma and aunt, and, taking my grandmamma's hand, "May I not be allowed a quarter of an hour's conversation with Miss Byron in your presence, ladies?" said he, speaking low. "We have, indeed, only friends and relations present; but it will be most agreeable, I believe, to the dear lady, that what I have to say to her, and to you, may be rather reported *to* the gentlemen than heard *by* them."

"By all means, Sir Charles," said my grandmamma. Then, whispering to my aunt, "No man in this company *thinks*, but Sir Charles. Excuse me, my dear."

The moment Sir Charles applied himself in this particular manner to them, my heart, without hearing what he said, was



at my mouth. I arose, and withdrew to the cedar parlor, followed by Lucy and Nancy. The gentlemen, seeming to recollect themselves, withdrew likewise to another apartment. My aunt came to me. "Love! But ah! my dear, how you tremble! You must come with me." And then she told me what he had said to my grandmamma and her.

"I have no courage — none at all," said I. "If apprehension, if timidity, be signs of love, I have them all. Sir Charles Grandison has not one." . . .

My aunt led me in to Sir Charles and my grandmamma. He met me at my entrance into the room, and in the most engaging manner, my aunt having taken her seat, conducted me to a chair which happened to be vacant between her and my grandmother. He took no notice of my emotion, and I the sooner recovered myself, and still the sooner, as he himself seemed to be in some little confusion. However, he sat down, and with a manly, yet respectful air, his voice gaining strength as he proceeded, thus delivered himself: . . .

Not well before, I was more than once apprehensive of fainting, as he talked, agreeable as was his talk, and engaging as was his manner. My grandmamma and aunt saw my complexion change at his particular address to me in the last part of his speech. Each put her kind hand on one of mine, and held it on it, as my other hand held my handkerchief now to my eyes, and now as a cover to myself-felt varying cheek. At the same moment that he ceased speaking, he took our triply united hands in both his, and in the most respectful yet graceful manner pressed each of the three with his lips, mine twice. I could not speak.

My grandmamma and aunt, delighted, yet tears standing in their eyes, looked upon each other, and upon me, each as expecting the other to speak.

"I have, perhaps," said he, with some emotion, "taken up too much of Miss Byron's attention on this my first personal declaration. I will now return to the company below. To-morrow I will do myself the honor to dine with you. We will for this evening postpone the important subject. Miss Byron, I presume, will be best pleased to have it so. I shall to-morrow be favored with the result of your deliberations. Meantime, may I meet with an interceding friend in every one I have had

the pleasure to see this day! I must flatter myself with the honor of Miss Byron's whole heart, as well as with the approbation of all her friends. I cannot be thought at present to deserve it; but it shall be the endeavor of my life to do so."

He withdrew, with a grace which was all his own.

The moment he was gone from us, my grandmamma threw her arms about her Harriet, then about my aunt; and they congratulated me, and each other. . . .

*Miss Byron, in continuation*

. . . After breakfast first one, then another, dropped away, and left only Sir Charles and me together. Lucy was the last that went, and the moment she was withdrawn, while I was thinking to retire to dress, he placed himself by me.

"Think me not abrupt, my dearest Miss Byron," said he, "that I take almost the only opportunity which has offered of entering upon a subject that is next my heart."

I found my face glow. I was silent.

"You have given me hope, madam; all your friends encourage that hope. I love, I revere your friends. What I have now to petition for is a confirmation of the hope I have presumed upon. Can you, madam (the female delicacy is more delicate than that of man can be), unequally as you may think yourself circumstanced with a man who owns that once he could have devoted himself to another lady, — can you say that the man before you is the man whom you *can*, whom you *do* prefer to any other?"

He stopped, expecting my answer.

After some hesitations, "I have been accustomed, sir," said I, "by those friends whom you so deservedly value, to speak nothing but the simplest truth. In an article of this moment, I should be inexcusable if —"

I stopped. His eyes were fixed upon my face. For my life I could not speak, yet wished to be able to speak.

"If — if *what*, madam?" And he snatched my hand, bowed his face upon it, held it there, not looking up to mine. I could then speak.

"If, thus urged, and by Sir Charles Grandison, I did not speak my heart. I answer — sir, I *CAN* — I *DO*."

I wanted, I thought, just then, to shrink into myself.

He kissed my hand with fervor, dropped down on one knee — again kissed it. “You have laid me, madam, under everlasting obligation; and will you permit me before I rise — loveliest of women, will you permit me to beg an early day? I have many affairs on my hands; many more in design, now I am come, as I hope, to settle in my native country for the rest of my life. My chief glory will be to behave commendably in the private life. I wish not to be a public man, and it must be a very particular call, for the service of my king and country united, that shall draw me out into public notice. Make me, madam, soon the happy husband I hope to be. I prescribe not to you the time, but you are above empty forms. May I presume to hope it will be before the end of a month to come?”

He had forgot himself. He said he would not prescribe to me.

After some involuntary hesitations, “I am afraid of nothing so much just now, sir,” said I, “as appearing, to a man of your honor and penetration, affected. Rise, sir, I beseech you. I cannot bear —”

“I will, madam, and rise as well as kneel, to thank you, when you have answered a question so very important to my happiness.” . . .

“I hope, sir, you will not be displeased. I did not think you would so soon be so *very* earnest. But this, sir, I say, — let me have reason to think that my happiness will not be the misfortune of a more excellent woman, and it shall be my endeavor to make the man happy who *only* can make me so.”

He clasped me in his arms with an ardor that displeased me not, on reflection, but at the time startled me. He then thanked me again on one knee. I held out the hand he had not in his, with intent to raise him, for I could not speak. He received it as a token of favor, kissed it with ardor, arose, — again pressed my cheek with his lips. I was too much surprised to repulse him with anger; but was he not too free? . . .



## HENRY FIELDING

### THE HISTORY OF THE ADVENTURES OF JOSEPH ANDREWS

1742

#### PREFACE

As it is possible the mere English reader may have a different idea of romance from the author of these little volumes, and may consequently expect a kind of entertainment not to be found, nor which was even intended, in the following pages, it may not be improper to premise a few words concerning this kind of writing, which I do not remember to have seen hitherto attempted in our language.

The Epic, as well as the Drama, is divided into tragedy and comedy. Homer, who was the father of this species of poetry, gave us a pattern of both these, though that of the latter kind is entirely lost; which Aristotle tells us bore the same relation to comedy which his *Iliad* bears to tragedy. And perhaps, that we have no more instances of it among the writers of antiquity is owing to the loss of this great pattern, which, had it survived, would have found its imitators equally with the other poems of this great original.

And farther, as this poetry may be tragic or comic, I will not scruple to say it may be likewise either in verse or prose; for though it wants one particular, which the critic enumerates in the constituent parts of an epic poem, namely metre, yet when any kind of writing contains all its other parts — such as fable, action, characters, sentiments, and diction — and is deficient in metre only, it seems, I think, reasonable to refer it to the epic; at least, as no critic hath thought proper to range it under another head, or to assign it a particular name to itself.

Thus the name *Telemachus* of the Archbishop of Cambray<sup>1</sup> appears to me of the epic kind, as well as the *Odyssey* of Homer; indeed, it is much fairer and more reasonable to give it a name

<sup>1</sup> Fénelon.

common with that species from which it differs only in a single instance, than to confound it with those which it resembles in no other. Such as those voluminous works, commonly called Romances, — namely *Clelia*, *Cleopatra*, *Astræa*, *Cassandra*, *The Grand Cyrus*, and innumerable others, which contain, as I apprehend, very little instruction or entertainment.

Now a comic romance is a comic epic poem in prose, differing from comedy as the serious epic from tragedy; its action being more extended and comprehensive, containing a much larger circle of incidents, and introducing a greater variety of characters. It differs from the serious romance in its fable and action, in this: that as in the one these are grave and solemn, so in the other they are light and ridiculous. It differs in its characters by introducing persons of inferior rank, and consequently of inferior manners, whereas the grave romance sets the highest before us. Lastly, in its sentiments and diction, by preserving the ludicrous instead of the sublime. In the diction, I think, burlesque itself may be sometimes admitted; of which many instances will occur in this work, as in the description of the battles, and some other places not necessary to be pointed out to the classical reader, for whose entertainment those parodies or burlesque imitations are chiefly calculated.

But, though we have sometimes admitted this in our diction, we have carefully excluded it from our sentiments and characters; for there it is never properly introduced, unless in writings of the burlesque kind, which this is not intended to be. Indeed, no two species of writing can differ more widely than the comic and the burlesque; for as the latter is ever the exhibition of what is monstrous and unnatural, and where our delight, if we examine it, arises from the surprising absurdity, as in appropriating the manners of the highest to the lowest, or *è converso*, so in the former we should ever confine ourselves strictly to nature, from the just imitation of which will flow all the pleasure we can this way convey to a sensible reader. And perhaps there is one reason why a comic writer should of all others be the least excused for deviating from nature, since it may not be always so easy for a serious poet to meet with the great and admirable, but life everywhere furnishes an accurate observer with the ridiculous.

I have hinted this little concerning burlesque, because I have

often heard that name given to performances which have been truly of the comic kind, from the author's having sometimes admitted it in his diction only; which, as it is the dress of poetry, doth, like the dress of men, establish characters (the one of the whole poem, and the other of the whole man) in vulgar opinion, beyond any of their greater excellences. But surely a certain drollery in style, where characters and sentiments are perfectly natural, no more constitutes the burlesque, than an empty pomp and dignity of words, where everything else is mean and low, can entitle any performance to the appellation of the true sublime.

And I apprehend my Lord Shaftesbury's opinion of mere burlesque agrees with mine, when he asserts there is no such thing to be found in the writings of the ancients. But perhaps I have less abhorrence than he professes for it; and that, not because I have had some little success on the stage this way, but rather as it contributes more to exquisite mirth and laughter than any other; and these are probably more wholesome physic for the mind, and conduce better to purge away spleen, melancholy, and ill affections, than is generally imagined. Nay, I will appeal to common observation, whether the same companies are not found more full of good-humor and benevolence, after they have been sweetened for two or three hours with entertainments of this kind, than when soured by a tragedy or a grave lecture.

But to illustrate all this by another science, in which, perhaps, we shall see the distinction more clearly and plainly, let us examine the works of a comic history painter, with those performances which the Italians call *caricatura*; where we shall find the true excellence of the former to consist in the exactest copying of nature, insomuch that a judicious eye instantly rejects anything *outré*, any liberty which the painter hath taken with the features of that *alma mater*; whereas in the caricatura we allow all license, — its aim is to exhibit monsters, not men, and all distortions and exaggerations whatever are within its proper province.

Now what caricatura is in painting, burlesque is in writing; and in the same manner the comic writer and painter correlate to each other. And here I shall observe that, as in the former the painter seems to have the advantage, so it is in the latter



infinitely on the side of the writer; for the monstrous is much easier to paint than describe, and the ridiculous to describe than paint.

And though perhaps this latter species doth not in either science so strongly affect and agitate the muscles as the other, yet it will be owned, I believe, that a more rational and useful pleasure arises to us from it. He who should call the ingenious Hogarth a burlesque painter would, in my opinion, do him very little honor; for sure it is much easier, much less the subject of admiration, to paint a man with a nose, or any other feature, of a preposterous size, or to expose him in some absurd or monstrous attitude, than to express the affections of men on canvas. It hath been thought a vast commendation of a painter to say his figures seem to breathe; but surely it is a much greater and nobler applause that they appear to think.

But to return. The ridiculous only, as I have before said, falls within my province in the present work. Nor will some explanation of the word be thought impertinent by the reader, if he considers how wonderfully it hath been mistaken, even by writers who have professed it. For to what but such a mistake can we attribute the many attempts to ridicule the blackest villainies, and, what is yet worse, the most dreadful calamities? What could exceed the absurdity of an author who should write the comedy of Nero, with the merry incident of ripping up his mother's belly? Or what would give a greater shock to humanity than an attempt to expose the miseries of poverty and distress to ridicule? And yet the reader will not want much learning to suggest such instances to himself.

Besides, it may seem remarkable that Aristotle, who is so fond and free of definitions, hath not thought proper to define the ridiculous. Indeed, where he tells us it is proper to comedy, he hath remarked that villainy is not its object; but he hath not, as I remember, positively asserted what is. Nor doth the Abbé Bellegarde, who hath written a treatise on this subject, though he shows us many species of it, once trace it to its fountain.

The only source of the true ridiculous, as it appears to me, is affectation. But though it arises from one spring only, when we consider the infinite streams into which this one branches, we shall presently cease to admire at the copious field it affords to an observer. Now affectation proceeds from one of these two

causes, vanity or hypocrisy; for as vanity puts us on affecting false characters, in order to purchase applause, so hypocrisy sets us on an endeavor to avoid censure, by concealing our vices under an appearance of their opposite virtues. And though these two causes are often confounded (for there is some difficulty in distinguishing them), yet, as they proceed from very different motives, so they are as clearly distinct in their operations; for, indeed, the affectation which arises from vanity is nearer to truth than the other, as it hath not that violent repugnancy of nature to struggle with, which that of the hypocrite hath. It may be likewise noted that affectation doth not imply an absolute negation of those qualities which are affected, and therefore, though, when it proceeds from hypocrisy, it be nearly allied to deceit, yet when it comes from vanity only, it partakes of the nature of ostentation. For instance, the affectation of liberality in a vain man differs visibly from the same affectation in the avaricious; for though the vain man is not what he would appear, or hath not the virtue he affects, to the degree he would be thought to have it, yet it sits less awkwardly on him than on the avaricious man, who is the very reverse of what he would seem to be.

From the discovery of this affectation arises the ridiculous, which always strikes the reader with surprise and pleasure, and that in a higher and stronger degree when the affectation arises from hypocrisy than when from vanity; for to discover any one to be the exact reverse of what he affects is more surprising, and consequently more ridiculous, than to find him a little deficient in the quality he desires the reputation of. I might observe that our Ben Jonson, who of all men understood the ridiculous the best, hath chiefly used the hypocritical affectation.

Now from affectation only, the misfortunes and calamities of life, or the imperfections of nature, may become the objects of ridicule. Surely he hath a very ill-framed mind who can look on ugliness, infirmity, or poverty, as ridiculous in themselves; nor do I believe any man living, who meets a dirty fellow riding through the streets in a cart, is struck with an idea of the ridiculous from it. But if he should see the same figure descend from his coach and six, or bolt from his chair with his hat under his arm, he would then begin to laugh, and with justice. In the

same manner, were we to enter a poor house and behold a wretched family shivering with cold and languishing with hunger, it would not incline us to laughter (at least we must have very diabolical natures if it would). But should we discover there a grate, instead of coals, adorned with flowers, empty plate or china dishes on the sideboard, or any other affectation of riches and finery, either on their persons or in their furniture, we might then indeed be excused for ridiculing so fantastical an appearance. Much less are natural imperfections the object of derision; but when ugliness aims at the applause of beauty, or lameness endeavors to display agility, it is then that these unfortunate circumstances, which at first moved our compassion, tend only to raise our mirth.

The poet carries this very far: —

None are for being what they are in fault,  
But for not being what they would be thought.

Where, if the metre would suffer the word *ridiculous* to close the first line, the thought would be rather more proper. Great vices are the proper objects of our detestation, smaller faults of our pity; but affectation appears to me the only true source of the ridiculous.

But perhaps it may be objected to me that I have, against my own rules, introduced vices, and of a very black kind, into this work. To which I shall answer, first, that it is very difficult to pursue a series of human actions, and keep clear from them. Secondly, that the vices to be found here are rather the accidental consequences of some human frailty or foible, than causes habitually existing in the mind. Thirdly, that they are never set forth as the objects of ridicule, but detestation. Fourthly, that they are never the principal figure at that time on the scene; and lastly, they never produce the intended evil. . . .

#### AN INTERVIEW BETWEEN PARSON ADAMS AND PARSON TRULLIBER

[BOOK II, CHAPTER XIV]

Parson Adams came to the house of parson Trulliber, whom he found stripped into his waistcoat, with an apron on, and a pail in his hand, just come from serving his hogs; for Mr. Trulli-



ber was a parson on Sundays, but all the other six days might more properly be called a farmer. He occupied a small piece of land of his own, besides which he rented a considerable deal more. His wife milked his cows, managed his dairy, and followed the markets with butter and eggs. The hogs fell chiefly to his care, which he carefully waited on at home, and attended to fairs; on which occasion he was liable to many jokes, his own size being, with much ale, rendered little inferior to that of the beasts he sold. He was indeed one of the largest men you should see, and could have acted the part of Sir John Falstaff without stuffing. Add to this that the rotundity of his belly was considerably increased by the shortness of his stature, his shadow ascending very near as far in height, when he lay on his back, as when he stood on his legs. His voice was loud and hoarse, and his accent extremely broad. To complete the whole, he had a stateliness in his gait, when he walked, not unlike that of a goose, only he stalked slower.

Mr. Trulliber, being informed that somebody wanted to speak with him, immediately slipped off his apron and clothed himself in an old night-gown, being the dress in which he always saw his company at home. His wife, who informed him of Mr. Adams's arrival, had made a small mistake, for she had told her husband she believed there was a man come for some of his hogs. This supposition made Mr. Trulliber hasten with the utmost expedition to attend his guest. He no sooner saw Adams than, not in the least doubting the cause of his errand to be what his wife had imagined, he told him he was come in very good time; that he expected a dealer that very afternoon; and added, they were all pure and fat, and upwards of twenty score apiece. Adams answered he believed he did not know him. "Yes, yes," cried Trulliber, "I have seen you often at fair. Why, we have dealt before now, mun, I warrant you. Yes, yes," cries he, "I remember thy face very well, though I have never sold thee a flitch of such bacon as is now in the sty." Upon which he laid violent hands on Adams, and dragged him into the hogs' sty, which was indeed but two steps from his parlor window. They were no sooner arrived there than he cried out, "Do but handle them! Step in, friend; art welcome to handle them, whether dost buy or no." At which words, opening the gate, he pushed Adams into the pig-sty, insisting,

on it that he should handle them before he would talk one word with him.

Adams, whose natural complacence was beyond any artificial, was obliged to comply before he was suffered to explain himself; and, laying hold on one of their tails, the unruly beast gave such a sudden spring that he threw poor Adams all along in the mire. Trulliber, instead of assisting him to get up, burst into a laughter, and, entering the sty, said to Adams, with some contempt, "Why, dost not know how to handle a hog?" and was going to lay hold of one himself; but Adams, who thought he had carried his complacence far enough, was no sooner on his legs than he escaped out of the reach of the animals, and cried out, "*Nil habeo cum porcis*; I am a clergyman, sir, and am not come to buy hogs."

Trulliber answered, he was sorry for his mistake, but that he must blame his wife; adding, she was a fool, and always committed blunders. He then desired him to walk in and clean himself, that he would only fasten up the sty and follow him. Adams desired leave to dry his great-coat, wig, and hat by the fire, which Trulliber granted. Mrs. Trulliber would have brought him a basin of water to wash his face, but her husband bid her be quiet like a fool as she was, or she would commit more blunders, and then directed Adams to the pump. While Adams was thus employed, Trulliber, conceiving no great respect for the appearance of his guest, fastened the parlor door, and now conducted him into the kitchen, telling him he believed a cup of drink would do him no harm, and whispered his wife to draw a little of the worst ale.

After a short silence Adams said, "I fancy, sir, you already perceive me to be a clergyman." "Aye, aye," cries Trulliber, grinning, "I perceive you have some cassock; I will not venture to caale it a whole one." Adams answered it was indeed none of the best, but he had the misfortune to tear it about ten years ago, in passing over a stile. Mrs. Trulliber, returning with the drink, told her husband she fancied the gentleman was a traveler, and that he would be glad to eat a bit. Trulliber bid her hold her impertinent tongue, and asked her if parsons used to travel without horses, adding, he supposed the gentleman had none by his having no boots on. "Yes, sir, yes," says Adams; "I have a horse, but I have left him behind me." "I am glad

to hear you have one," says Trulliber, "for I assure you I don't love to see clergymen on foot; it is not seemly, nor suiting the dignity of the cloth."

Here Trulliber made a long oration on the dignity of the cloth (or rather gown), not much worth relating, till his wife had spread the table and set a mess of porridge on it for his breakfast. He then said to Adams, "I don't know, friend, how you came to caale on me; however, as you are here, if you think proper to eat a morsel, you may." Adams accepted the invitation, and the two parsons sat down together, Mrs. Trulliber waiting behind her husband's chair, as was, it seems, her custom. Trulliber ate heartily, but scarce put anything in his mouth without finding fault with his wife's cookery; all which the poor woman bore patiently. Indeed, she was so absolute an admirer of her husband's greatness and importance, of which she had frequent hints from his own mouth, that she almost carried her adoration to an opinion of his infallibility. . . .

As soon as their breakfast was ended, Adams began in the following manner: "I think, sir, it is high time to inform you of the business of my embassy. I am a traveler, and am passing this way in company with two young people, a lad and a damsel, my parishioners, towards my own cure. We stopped at a house of hospitality in the parish, where they directed me to you as having the cure." "Though I am but a curate," says Trulliber, "I believe I am as warm as the vicar himself, or perhaps the rector of the next parish too; I believe I could buy them both." "Sir," cries Adams, "I rejoice thereat. Now, sir, my business is, that we are by various accidents stripped of our money, and are not able to pay our reckoning, being seven shillings. I therefore request you to assist me with the loan of those seven shillings, and also seven shillings more; which, peradventure, I shall return to you, but if not, I am convinced you will joyfully embrace such an opportunity of laying up treasure in a better place than any this world affords."

Suppose a stranger, who entered the chambers of a lawyer, being imagined a client, when the lawyer was preparing his palm for the fee, should pull out a writ against him. Suppose an apothecary, at the door of a chariot containing some great doctor of eminent skill, should, instead of directions to a patient, present him with a potion for himself. Suppose a minis-



ter should, instead of a good round sum, treat my Lord——, or Sir——, or Esq.——, with a good broomstick. Suppose a civil companion, or a led captain, should, instead of virtue and honor and beauty and parts and admiration, thunder vice and infamy and ugliness and folly and contempt in his patron's ears. Suppose, when a tradesman first carries in his bill, the man of fashion should pay it; or suppose, if he did so, the tradesman should abate what he had overcharged on the supposition of waiting. In short, suppose what you will, you never can nor will suppose anything equal to the astonishment which seized on Trulliber, as soon as Adams had ended his speech. A while he rolled his eyes in silence, sometimes surveying Adams, then his wife, then casting them on the ground, then lifting them up to heaven. At last he burst forth in the following accents:—

“Sir, I believe I know where to lay up my little treasure as well as another. I thank G—, if I am not so warm as some, I am content; that is a blessing greater than riches, and he to whom that is given need ask no more. To be content with a little is greater than to possess the world, which a man may possess without being so. Lay up my treasure! What matters where a man's treasure is whose heart is in the Scriptures? There is the treasure of a Christian.”

At these words the water ran from Adams's eyes; and, catching Trulliber by the hand in a rapture, “Brother,” says he, “heavens bless the accident by which I came to see you! I would have walked many a mile to have communed with you; and, believe me, I will shortly pay you a second visit. But my friends, I fancy, by this time, wonder at my stay; so let me have the money immediately.”

Trulliber then put on a stern look, and cried out, “Thou dost not intend to rob me?” At which the wife, bursting into tears, fell on her knees and roared out, “O dear sir! for heaven's sake don't rob my master; we are but poor people.” “Get up, for a fool as thou art, and go about thy business!” said Trulliber. “Dost think the man will venture his life? He is a beggar, and no robber.” “Very true, indeed,” answered Adams. “I wish, with all my heart, the tithing-man was here,” cries Trulliber. “I would have thee punished as a vagabond for thy impudence. Fourteen shillings indeed! I won't give thee a farthing. I believe thou art no more a clergyman than the woman there”

(pointing to his wife); "but if thou art, dost deserve to have thy gown stripped over thy shoulders, for running about the country in such a manner."

"I forgive your suspicions," says Adams. "But suppose I am not a clergyman, I am nevertheless thy brother; and thou, as a Christian, much more as a clergyman, art obliged to relieve my distress."

"Dost preach to me?" replied Trulliber. "Dost pretend to instruct me in my duty?" "Ifacks, a good story," cries Mrs. Trulliber, "to preach to my master." "Silence, woman!" cries Trulliber. "I would have thee know, friend" (addressing himself to Adams), "I shall not learn my duty from such as thee. I know what charity is, better than to give to vagabonds." "Besides, if we were inclined, the poor's rate obliges us to give so much charity," cries the wife. "Pugh! Thou art a fool. Poor's rate! Hold thy nonsense!" answered Trulliber; and then, turning to Adams, he told him he would give him nothing.

"I am sorry," answered Adams, "that you do know what charity is, since you practice it no better. I must tell you, if you trust to your knowledge for your justification, you will find yourself deceived, though you should add faith to it, without good works."

"Fellow," cries Trulliber, "dost thou speak against faith in my house! Get out of my doors; I will no longer remain under the same roof with a wretch who speaks wantonly of faith and the Scriptures." "Name not the Scriptures!" says Adams. "How! Not name the Scriptures! Do you disbelieve the Scriptures?" cries Trulliber. "No; but you do," answered Adams, "if I may reason from your practice; for their commands are so explicit, and their rewards and punishments so immense, that it is impossible a man should stedfastly believe without obeying. Now there is no command more express, no duty more frequently enjoined, than charity. Whoever, therefore, is void of charity, I make no scruple of pronouncing that he is no Christian."

"I would not advise thee," says Trulliber, "to say that I am no Christian. I won't take it of you; for I believe I am as good a man as thyself." And indeed, though he was now rather too corpulent for athletic exercises, he had in his youth been one of the best boxers and cudgel-players in the county. His wife,

seeing him clench his fist, interposed, and begged him not to fight, but show himself a true Christian, and take the law of him. As nothing could provoke Adams to strike but an absolute assault on himself or his friend, he smiled at the angry look and gestures of Trulliber, and, telling him he was sorry to see such men in orders, departed without further ceremony.

## THE HISTORY OF TOM JONES, A FOUNDLING

1749

[Each of the eighteen Books of *Tom Jones* is opened with an introductory chapter, — sometimes an informal digression, sometimes a formal critical essay, giving, like the Preface to *Joseph Andrews*, important views of the novelist's conception of his art. The following extracts include the introductory chapters of Books I, X, and XIII, together with an episode from Book XVI, chapter v.]

### THE INTRODUCTION TO THE WORK, OR BILL OF FARE TO THE FEAST

AN author ought to consider himself, not as a gentleman who gives a private or eleemosynary treat, but rather as one who keeps a public ordinary, at which all persons are welcome for their money. In the former case, it is well known that the entertainer provides what fare he pleases; and though this should be very indifferent, and utterly disagreeable to the taste of his company, they must not find any fault; nay, on the contrary, good breeding forces them outwardly to approve and to commend whatever is set before them. Now the contrary of this happens to the master of an ordinary. Men who pay for what they eat will insist on gratifying their palates, however nice and whimsical these may prove; and, if everything is not agreeable to their taste, will challenge a right to censure, to abuse, and to d—n their dinner without control.

To prevent, therefore, giving offense to their customers by any such disappointment, it hath been usual, with the honest and well-meaning host, to provide a bill of fare, which all persons may peruse at their first entrance into the house; and, having thence acquainted themselves with the entertainment which they may expect, may either stay and regale with what is provided for them, or may depart to some other ordinary better accommodated to their taste.



As we do not disdain to borrow wit or wisdom from any man who is capable of lending us either, we have condescended to take a hint from these honest victualers, and shall prefix not only a general bill of fare to our whole entertainment, but shall likewise give the reader particular bills to every course which is to be served up in this and the ensuing volumes.

The provision, then, which we have here made is no other than *Human Nature*. Nor do I fear that my sensible reader, though most luxurious in his taste, will start, cavil, or be offended, because I have named but one article. The tortoise, as the alderman of Bristol, well learned in eating, knows by much experience, besides the delicious calibash and calipee, contains many different kinds of food; nor can the learned reader be ignorant that in human nature, though here collected under one general name, is such prodigious variety, that a cook will have sooner gone through all the several species of animal and vegetable food in the world, than an author will be able to exhaust so extensive a subject.

An objection may perhaps be apprehended from the more delicate, that this dish is too common and vulgar; for what else is the subject of all the romances, novels, plays and poems, with which the stalls abound? Many exquisite viands might be rejected by the epicure, if it was a sufficient cause for his contemning of them as common and vulgar, that something was to be found in the most paltry alleys under the same name. In reality, true nature is as difficult to be met with in authors, as the Bayonne ham, or Bologna sausage, is to be found in the shops.

But the whole, to continue the same metaphor, consists in the cookery of the author; for, as Mr. Pope tells us, —

True wit is nature to advantage dressed.

What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.

The same animal which hath the honor to have some part of his flesh eaten at the table of a duke, may perhaps be degraded in another part, and some of his limbs gibbeted, as it were, in the vilest stall in town. Where, then, lies the difference between the food of the nobleman and the porter, if both are at dinner on the same ox or calf, but in the seasoning, the dressing, the garnishing, and the setting forth? Hence the one provokes and incites

the most languid appetite, and the other turns and palls that which is the sharpest and keenest.

In like manner, the excellence of the mental entertainment consists less in the subject than in the author's skill in well dressing it up. How pleased, therefore, will the reader be to find that we have, in the following work, adhered closely to one of the highest principles of the best cook which the present age, or perhaps that of Heliogabalus, hath produced. This great man, as is well known to all lovers of polite eating, begins at first by setting plain things before his hungry guests, rising afterwards by degrees, as their stomachs may be supposed to decrease, to the very quintessence of sauce and spices. In like manner we shall represent human nature at first to the reader in that more plain and simple manner in which it is found in the country, and shall hereafter hash and ragout it with all the high French and Italian seasoning of affectation and vice which courts and cities afford. By these means, we doubt not but our reader may be rendered desirous to read on forever, as the great person just above mentioned is supposed to have made some persons eat.

CONTAINING INSTRUCTIONS VERY NECESSARY TO BE PERUSED  
BY MODERN CRITICS

Reader, it is impossible we should know what sort of person thou wilt be: for perhaps thou mayst be as learned in human nature as Shakespeare himself was, and perhaps thou mayst be no wiser than some of his editors. Now lest this latter should be the case, we think proper, before we go any farther together, to give thee a few wholesome admonitions, that thou mayst not as grossly misunderstand and misrepresent us, as some of the said editors have misunderstood and misrepresented their author.

First, then, we warn thee not too hastily to condemn any of the incidents in this our history as impertinent and foreign to our main design, because thou dost not immediately conceive in what manner such incident may conduce to that design. This work may, indeed, be considered as a great creation of our own; and for a little reptile of a critic to presume to find fault with any of its parts, without knowing the manner in which the whole is connected, and before he comes to the final catastrophe,

is a most presumptuous absurdity. The allusion and metaphor we have here made use of, we must acknowledge to be infinitely too great for our occasion, but there is indeed no other which is at all adequate to express the difference between an author of the first rate and a critic of the lowest.

Another caution we would give thee, my good reptile, is that thou dost not find out too near a resemblance between certain characters here introduced; as for instance, between the landlady who appears in the seventh book, and her in the ninth. Thou art to know, friend, that there are certain characteristics in which most individuals of every profession and occupation agree. To be able to preserve these characteristics, and at the same time to diversify their operations, is one talent of a good writer. Again, to mark the nice distinction between two persons actuated by the same vice or folly is another; and as this last talent is found in very few writers, so is the true discernment of it found in as few readers, — though I believe the observation of this forms a very principal pleasure in those who are capable of the discovery. Every person, for instance, can distinguish between Sir Epicure Mammon and Sir Fopling Flutter;<sup>1</sup> but to note the difference between Sir Fopling Flutter and Sir Courtly Nice<sup>2</sup> requires a most exquisite judgment; for want of which, vulgar spectators of plays very often do great injustice in the theatre, where I have sometimes known a poet in danger of being convicted as a thief, upon much worse evidence than the resemblance of hands hath been held to be in the law. In reality, I apprehend every amorous widow on the stage would run the hazard of being condemned as a servile imitation of Dido, but that happily very few of our playhouse critics understand enough of Latin to read Virgil.

In the next place, we must admonish thee, my worthy friend (for perhaps thy heart may be better than thy head), not to condemn a character as a bad one, because it is not perfectly a good one. If thou dost delight in these models of perfection, there are books enow written to gratify thy taste; but as we have not, in the course of our conversation, ever happened to meet with any such person, we have not chosen to introduce any such here. To say the truth, I as little question whether

<sup>1</sup> In Jonson's *Alchemist* and Etherege's *Man of Mode*.

<sup>2</sup> In Crowne's *Sir Courtly Nice*.



mere man ever arrived at this consummate degree of excellence, as well as whether there hath ever existed a monster bad enough to verify that

— *nulla virtute redemptum*  
*vitiis*<sup>1</sup> —

in Juvenal. Nor do I, indeed, conceive the good purposes served by inserting characters of such angelic perfection or such diabolical depravity, in any work of invention: since from contemplating either, the mind of man is more likely to be overwhelmed with sorrow and shame, than to draw any good uses from such patterns. For in the former instance he may be both concerned and ashamed to see a pattern of excellence, in his nature, which he may reasonably despair of ever arriving at; and in contemplating the latter, he may be no less affected with those uneasy sensations, at seeing the nature of which he is a partaker degraded into so odious and detestable a creature.

In fact, if there be enough of goodness in a character to engage the admiration and affection of a well-disposed mind, though there should appear some of those little blemishes, *quas humana parum cavit natura*,<sup>2</sup> they will raise our compassion rather than our abhorrence. Indeed nothing can be of more moral use than the imperfections which are seen in examples of this kind, since such form a kind of surprise, more apt to affect and dwell upon our minds, than the faults of very vicious and wicked persons. The foibles and vices of men in whom there is great mixture of good, become more glaring objects, from the virtues which contrast them and show their deformity; and when we find such vices attended with their evil consequence to our favorite characters, we are not only taught to shun them for our own sake, but to hate them for the mischiefs they have already brought on those we love.

#### AN INVOCATION

Come, bright love of fame, inspire my glowing breast: not thee I call, who, over swelling tides of blood and tears, dost bear the hero on to glory, while sighs of millions waft his spreading sails; but thee, fair, gentle maid, whom Mnesis,<sup>3</sup> happy nymph, first on the banks of Hebrus didst produce. Thee whom Mæ-

<sup>1</sup> "Redeemed from vice by not a single virtue."

<sup>2</sup> "Which human nature took too little care to avoid."

<sup>3</sup> For Mnemosyne, mother of the Muses.

onia<sup>1</sup> educated, whom Mantua<sup>2</sup> charmed, and who, on that fair hill which overlooks the proud metropolis of Britain, sat, with thy Milton, sweetly tuning the heroic lyre; — fill my ravished fancy with the hopes of charming ages yet to come. Foretell me that some tender maid, whose grandmother is yet unborn, hereafter, when, under the fictitious name of Sophia, she reads the real worth which once existed in my Charlotte, shall from her sympathetic breast send forth the heaving sigh. Do thou teach me not only to foresee, but to enjoy, — nay, even to feed on future praise. Comfort me by a solemn assurance that, when the little parlor in which I sit at this instant shall be reduced to a worse furnished box, I shall be read with honor by those who never knew nor saw me, and whom I shall neither know nor see.

And thou, much plumper dame, whom no airy forms nor phantoms of imagination clothe; whom the well-seasoned beef, and pudding richly stained with plums, delight; — thee I call! In Grub Street school didst thou suck in the elements of thy erudition. Here hast thou, in thy maturer age, taught poetry to tickle not the fancy, but the pride of the patron. Comedy from thee learns a grave and solemn air; while tragedy storms loud, and rends th' affrighted theatres with its thunder. To soothe thy wearied limbs in slumber, Alderman History tells his tedious tale; and again to awaken thee, Monsieur Romance performs his surprising tricks of dexterity. Nor less thy well-fed bookseller obeys thy influence. By thy advice the heavy, unread folio lump, which long had dozed on the dusty shelf, piece-mealed into numbers, runs nimbly through the nation. Instructed by thee, some books, like quacks, impose on the world by promising wonders, while others turn beaus, and trust all their merits to a gilded outside. Come, thou jolly substance, with thy shining face, keep back thy inspiration, but hold forth thy tempting rewards; thy shining, chinking heap; thy quickly convertible bank-bill, big with unseen riches; thy often-varying stock; the warm, the comfortable house; and lastly, a fair portion of that bounteous mother whose flowing breasts yield redundant sustenance for all her numerous offspring, did not some too greedily and wantonly drive their brethren from the teat. Come thou; and if I am too tasteless of thy valuable treasures,

<sup>1</sup> Birthplace of Homer.

<sup>2</sup> Birthplace of Virgil.

warm my heart with the transporting thought of conveying them to others. Tell me that through thy bounty the prattling babes whose innocent play hath often been interrupted by my labors may one time be amply rewarded for them.

And now this ill-yoked pair, this lean shadow and this fat substance, have prompted me to write, whose assistance shall I invoke to direct my pen?

First, Genius, thou gift of heaven; without whose aid in vain we struggle against the stream of nature. Thou who dost sow the generous seeds which art nourishes and brings to perfection, do thou kindly take me by the hand, and lead me through all the mazes, the winding labyrinths of nature. Initiate me into all those mysteries which profane eyes never beheld. Teach me — which to thee is no difficult task — to know mankind better than they know themselves. Remove that mist which dims the intellects of mortals, and causes them to adore men for their art, or to detest them for their cunning in deceiving others, when they are in reality the objects only of ridicule for deceiving themselves. Strip off the thin disguise of wisdom from self-conceit, of plenty from avarice, and of glory from ambition. Come thou, that hast inspired thy Aristophanes, thy Lucian, thy Cervantes, thy Rabelais, thy Molière, thy Shakespeare, thy Swift, thy Marivaux, — fill my pages with humor, till mankind learn the good-nature to laugh only at the follies of others, and the humility to grieve at their own.

And thou, almost the constant attendant on true genius, Humanity, bring all thy tender sensations. If thou hast already disposed of them all between thy Allen and thy Lyttelton,<sup>1</sup> steal them a little while from their bosoms. Not without these the tender scene is painted. From these alone proceed the noble, disinterested friendship, the melting love, the generous sentiment, the ardent gratitude, the soft compassion, the candid opinion, and all those strong energies of a good mind, which fill the moistened eyes with tears, the glowing cheeks with blood, and swell the heart with tides of grief, joy, and benevolence.

And thou, O Learning (for without thy assistance nothing pure, nothing correct, can genius produce), do thou guide my pen. Thee, in thy favorite fields, where the limpid, gently-

<sup>1</sup> Ralph Allen and Lord Lyttelton, distinguished for their benevolence.



rolling Thames washes thy Etonian banks, in early youth I have worshiped. To thee, at thy birchen altar, with true Spartan devotion, I have sacrificed my blood. Come, then, and from thy vast, luxuriant stores, in long antiquity piled up, pour forth the rich profusion. Open thy Mæonian and thy Mantuan coffers, with whatever else includes thy philosophic, thy poetic, and thy historical treasures, whether with Greek or Roman characters thou hast chosen to inscribe the ponderous chests; give me awhile that key to all thy treasures, which to thy Warburton<sup>1</sup> thou hast entrusted.

Lastly, come Experience, long conversant with the wise, the good, the learned, and the polite. Nor with them only, but with every kind of character, from the minister at his levee to the bailiff in his sponging-house, — from the duchess at her drum to the landlady behind her bar. From thee only can the manners of mankind be known, to which the recluse pedant, however great his parts or extensive his learning may be, hath ever been a stranger.

Come all these, — and more, if possible; for arduous is the task I have undertaken, and without all your assistance will, I find, be too heavy for me to support. But if you all smile on my labors, I hope still to bring them to a happy conclusion.

#### JONES GOES TO A PLAY WITH MRS. MILLER AND PARTRIDGE

. . . As soon as the play, which was *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, began, Partridge was all attention, nor did he break silence till the entrance of the ghost; upon which he asked Jones what man that was in the strange dress; "something," said he, "like what I have seen in a picture. Sure it is not armor, is it?" Jones answered, "That is the ghost." To which Partridge replied with a smile, "Persuade me to that, sir, if you can. Though I can't say I ever actually saw a ghost in my life, yet I am certain I should know one if I saw him, better than that comes to. No, no, sir, ghosts don't appear in such dresses as that, neither."

In this mistake, which caused much laughter in the neighborhood of Partridge, he was suffered to continue, till the scene between the ghost and Hamlet, when Partridge gave that credit to Mr. Garrick which he had denied to Jones, and fell into so

<sup>1</sup> Dr. William (later Bishop) Warburton, a learned writer on theology and literature.

violent a trembling that his knees knocked against each other. Jones asked him what was the matter, and whether he was afraid of the warrior upon the stage? "O la! sir," said he, "I perceive now it is what you told me. I am not afraid of anything, for I know it is but a play. And if it was really a ghost, it could do no one no harm at such a distance, and in so much company; and yet if I was frightened, I am not the only person."

"Why, who," cries Jones, "dost thou take to be such a coward here besides thyself?"

"Nay, you may call me coward if you will; but if that little man there upon the stage is not frightened, I never saw any man frightened in my life. Ay, ay, go along with you, — ay, to be sure! Who's fool then? Will you? Lud have mercy upon such foolhardiness! Whatever happens, it is good enough for you. — Follow you? I'd follow the devil as soon. Nay, perhaps it is the devil, — for they say he can put on what likeness he pleases. — Oh! here he is again. No farther! No, you have gone far enough already; farther than I'd have gone for all the king's dominions."

Jones offered to speak, but Partridge cried, "Hush! hush! dear sir, don't you hear him?" And during the whole speech of the ghost, he sat with his eyes fixed partly on the ghost and partly on Hamlet, and with his mouth open, the same passions which succeeded each other in Hamlet succeeding likewise in him.

When the scene was over Jones said, "Why, Partridge, you exceed my expectations. You enjoy the play more than I conceived possible." "Nay, sir," answered Partridge, "if you are not afraid of the devil, I can't help it; but to be sure, it is natural to be surprised at such things, though I know there is nothing in them. Not that it was the ghost that surprised me, neither; for I should have known that to have been only a man in a strange dress; but when I saw the little man so frightened himself, it was that which took hold of me." "And dost thou imagine, then, Partridge," cries Jones, "that he was really frightened?" "Nay, sir," said Partridge, "did not you yourself observe afterwards, when he found it was his own father's spirit, and how he was murdered in the garden, how his fear forsook him by degrees, and he was struck dumb with sorrow,

as it were, just as I should have been had it been my own case? — But hush! O la! what noise is that? There he is again! Well, to be certain, though I know there is nothing at all in it, I am glad I am not down yonder, where those men are.” Then, turning his eyes again upon Hamlet, “Ay, you may draw your sword; what signifies a sword against the power of the devil?”

During the second act Partridge made very few remarks. He greatly admired the fineness of the dresses, nor could he help observing upon the king’s countenance. “Well,” said he, “how people may be deceived by faces! *Nulla fides fronti*<sup>1</sup> is, I find, a true saying. Who would think, by looking in the king’s face, that he had ever committed a murder?” He then inquired after the ghost; but Jones, who intended he should be surprised, gave him no other satisfaction than that he might possibly see him again soon, and in a flash of fire.

Partridge sat in fearful expectation of this; and now, when the ghost made his next appearance, Partridge cried out, “There, sir, now! what say you now? Is he frightened now, or no? As much frightened as you think me, — and to be sure, nobody can help some fears. I would not be in so bad a condition as what’s his name, — Squire Hamlet, — is there, for all the world. Bless me! what’s become of the spirit? As I am a living soul, I thought I saw him sink into the earth.” “Indeed, you saw right,” answered Jones. “Well, well,” cries Partridge, “I know it is only a play; and besides, if there was anything in all this, Madam Miller would not laugh so; for as to you, sir, you would not be afraid, I believe, if the devil was here in person. — There, there! Ay, no wonder you are in such a passion! Shake the vile wicked wretch to pieces! If she was my own mother, I should serve her so. To be sure all duty to a mother is forfeited by such wicked doings. — Ay, go about your business! I hate the sight of you.”

Our critic was now pretty silent till the play which Hamlet introduces before the king. This he did not at first understand, till Jones explained it to him, but he no sooner entered into the spirit of it, than he began to bless himself that he had never committed murder. Then, turning to Mrs. Miller, he asked her if she did not imagine the king looked as if he was touched;

<sup>1</sup> “Put no trust in the outside.”



"though he is," said he, "a good actor, and doth all he can to hide it. Well, I would not have so much to answer for as that wicked man there hath, to sit upon a much higher chair than he sits upon. No wonder he ran away; for your sake I'll never trust an innocent face again."

The grave-digging scene next engaged the attention of Partridge, who expressed much surprise at the number of skulls thrown upon the stage. To which Jones answered that it was one of the most famous burial-places about town. "No wonder, then," cries Partridge, "that the place is haunted. But I never saw in my life a worse grave-digger. I had a sexton, when I was clerk, that should have dug three graves while he is digging one. The fellow handles a spade as if it was the first time he had ever had one in his hand. Ay, ay, you may sing; you had rather sing than work, I believe." Upon Hamlet's taking up the skull, he cried out, "Well! it is strange to see how fearless some men are. I never could bring myself to touch anything belonging to a dead man, on any account. He seemed frightened enough, too, at the ghost, I thought. *Nemo omnibus horis sapit.*"<sup>1</sup>

Little more worth remembering occurred during the play, at the end of which Jones asked him which of the players he had liked best. To this he answered, with some appearance of indignation at the question, "The king, without doubt." "Indeed, Mr. Partridge," says Mrs. Miller, "you are not of the same opinion with the town; for they are all agreed that Hamlet is acted by the best player who ever was on the stage." "He the best player!" cries Partridge, with a contemptuous sneer. "Why, I could act as well as he myself. I am sure if I had seen a ghost I should have looked in the very same manner, and done just as he did. And then, to be sure, in that scene, as you called it, between him and his mother, where you told me he acted so fine, why, Lord help me, any man — that is, any good man — that had such a mother would have done exactly the same. I know you are only joking with me; but indeed, madam, though I was never at a play in London, yet I have seen acting before in the country; and the king for my money. He speaks all his words distinctly, half as loud again as the other. Anybody may see he is an actor." . . .

<sup>1</sup> "No one is wise all the time."

## PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE, FOURTH EARL OF CHESTERFIELD

### LETTERS TO HIS SON, PHILIP STANHOPE

[Lord Chesterfield's letters to his natural son were chiefly written between 1739 and 1754. They were published in 1774, the year following his death, by the son's widow, Mrs. Eugenia Stanhope, who sold them to the publisher for £1500. They attained immediate popularity, and were often reprinted; they were also frequently attacked for their cynicism and worldliness. (See the comment of Dr. Johnson, quoted by Boswell, page 638, below.)]

#### XLIII

October 9, 1747.

. . . PEOPLE will, in a great degree, and not without reason, form their opinion of you upon that which they have of your friends; and there is a Spanish proverb which says very justly, "Tell me whom you live with, and I will tell you who you are." One may fairly suppose that a man who makes a knave or a fool his friend has something very bad to do or to conceal. But, at the same time that you carefully decline the friendship of knaves and fools, if it can be called friendship, there is no occasion to make either of them your enemies, wantonly and unprovoked; for they are numerous bodies, and I would rather choose a secure neutrality, than alliance, or war, with either of them. You may be a declared enemy to their vices and follies, without being marked out by them as a personal one. Their enmity is the next dangerous thing to their friendship. Have a real reserve with almost everybody, and have a seeming reserve with almost nobody; for it is very disagreeable to seem reserved, and very dangerous not to be so. Few people find the true medium; many are ridiculously mysterious and reserved upon trifles, and many imprudently communicative of all they know.

The next thing to the choice of your friends is the choice of your company. Endeavor, as much as you can, to keep company with people above you. There you rise, as much as you sink with people below you; for (as I have mentioned before) you are whatever the company you keep is. Do not mistake,

when I say company above you, and think that I mean with regard to their birth; that is the least consideration; but I mean with regard to their merit, and the light in which the world considers them.

There are two sorts of good company: one, which is called the *beau monde*, and consists of those people who have the lead in courts and in the gay part of life; the other consists of those who are distinguished by some peculiar merit, or who excel in some particular and valuable art or science. For my own part, I used to think myself in company as much above me, when I was with Mr. Addison and Mr. Pope, as if I had been with all the princes in Europe. . . .

You may possibly ask me whether a man has it always in his power to get into the best company? and how? I say, Yes, he has, by deserving it; provided he is but in circumstances which enable him to appear upon the footing of a gentleman. Merit and good breeding will make their way everywhere. Knowledge will introduce him, and good breeding will endear him, to the best companies; for, as I have often told you, politeness and good breeding are absolutely necessary to adorn any or all other good qualities or talents. Without them no knowledge, no perfection whatsoever, is seen in its best light. The scholar, without good breeding, is a pedant; the philosopher a cynic; the soldier a brute; and every man disagreeable. . . .

## LVII

February 22, 1748.

. . . Some learned men, proud of their knowledge, only speak to decide, and give judgment without appeal. The consequence of which is, that mankind, provoked by the insult and injured by the oppression, revolt; and, in order to shake off the tyranny, even call the lawful authority in question. The more you know, the modester you should be; and (by the by) that modesty is the surest way of gratifying your vanity. Even where you are sure, seem doubtful; represent, but do not pronounce; and, if you would convince others, seem open to conviction yourself.

Others, to show their learning, or often from the prejudices of a school education, where they hear nothing else, are always talking of the Ancients as something more than men, and of the Moderns as something less. They are never without a classic or



two in their pockets; they stick to the old good sense; they read none of the modern trash; and will show you plainly that no improvement has been made, in any one art or science, these last seventeen hundred years. I would by no means have you disown your acquaintance with the ancients, but still less would I have you brag of an exclusive intimacy with them. Speak of the moderns without contempt, and of the ancients without idolatry; judge them all by their merits, but not by their age; and, if you happen to have an Elzevir classic in your pocket, neither show it nor mention it.

Some great scholars, most absurdly, draw all their maxims, both for public and private life, from what they call parallel cases in the ancient authors; without considering that, in the first place, there never were, since the creation of the world, two cases exactly parallel, and, in the next place, that there never was a case stated, or even known, by any historian, with every one of its circumstances, — which, however, ought to be known in order to be reasoned from. Reason upon the case itself, and the several circumstances that attend it, and act accordingly; but not from the authority of ancient poets or historians. Take into your consideration, if you please, cases seemingly analogous, but take them as helps only, not as guides. We are really so prejudiced by our educations, that, as the ancients deified their heroes, we deify their madmen; of which, with all due regard to antiquity, I take Leonidas and Curtius to have been two distinguished ones. And yet a solid pedant would, in a speech in Parliament relative to a tax of twopence a pound upon some commodity or other, quote those two heroes as examples of what we ought to do and suffer for our country. I have known these absurdities carried so far by people of injudicious learning, that I should not be surprised if some of them were to propose, while we are at war with the Gauls, that a number of geese should be kept in the Tower, upon account of the infinite advantage which Rome received, *in a parallel case*, from a certain number of geese in the Capitol. This way of reasoning and this way of speaking will always form a poor politician and a puerile declaimer.

There is another species of learned men who, though less dogmatical and supercilious, are not less impertinent. These are the communicative and shining pedants, who adorn their

conversation, even with women, by happy quotations of Greek and Latin, and who have contracted such a familiarity with the Greek and Roman authors that they call them by certain names or epithets denoting intimacy. As "old Homer," "that sly rogue Horace," "Maro" instead of Virgil, and "Naso" instead of Ovid. These are often imitated by coxcombs, who have no learning at all, but who have got some names and some scraps of ancient authors by heart, which they improperly and impertinently retail in all companies, in hopes of passing for scholars. If, therefore, you would avoid the accusation of pedantry on the one hand, or the suspicion of ignorance on the other, abstain from learned ostentation. Speak the language of the company you are in; speak it purely, and unlarded with any other. Never seem wiser nor more learned than the people you are with. Wear your learning, like your watch, in a private pocket, and do not merely pull it out and strike it merely to show you have one. If you are asked what o'clock it is, tell it; but do not proclaim it hourly and unasked, like the watchman.

Upon the whole, remember that learning (I mean Greek and Roman learning) is a most useful and necessary ornament, which it is shameful not to be master of; but, at the same time, most carefully avoid those errors and abuses which I have mentioned, and which too often attend it. Remember, too, that great modern knowledge is still more necessary than ancient, and that you had better know perfectly the present than the old state of Europe; though I would have you well acquainted with both. . . .

## LXIV

April 26, 1748.

. . . Were most historical events traced up to their true causes, I fear we should not find them much more noble nor disinterested than Luther's disappointed avarice; and therefore I look with some contempt upon those refining and sagacious historians who ascribe all, even the most common events, to some deep political cause; whereas mankind is made up of inconsistencies, and no man acts invariably up to his predominant character. The wisest man sometimes acts weakly, and the weakest sometimes wisely. Our jarring passions, our variable humors, nay, our greater or lesser degree of health and spirits, produce such contradictions in our conduct that, I be-

lieve, those are the oftenest mistaken who ascribe our actions to the most seemingly obvious motives. And I am convinced that a light supper, and a good night's sleep, and a fine morning, have sometimes made a hero of the same man who, by an indigestion, a restless night, and a rainy morning, would have proved a coward.

Our best conjectures, therefore, as to the true springs of actions, are but very uncertain, and the actions themselves are all that we must pretend to know from history. That Cæsar was murdered by twenty-three conspirators, I make no doubt, but I very much doubt that their love of liberty, and of their country, was their sole or even principal motive; and I dare say that, if the truth were known, we should find that many other motives at least concurred, even in the great Brutus himself, — such as pride, envy, personal pique, and disappointment. Nay, I cannot help carrying my pyrrhonism still further, and extending it often to historical facts themselves, at least to most of the circumstances with which they are related; and every day's experience confirms me in this historical incredulity. Do we ever hear the most recent fact related exactly in the same way, by the several people who were at the same time eye-witnesses of it? No. One mistakes, another misrepresents; and others warp it a little to their own turn of mind, or private views. A man who has been concerned in a transaction will not write it fairly, and a man who has not cannot. . . .

## LXXVI

September 5, 1748.

. . . As women are a considerable, or at least a pretty numerous, part of company, and as their suffrages go a great way towards establishing a man's character in the fashionable part of the world (which is of great importance to the fortune and figure he proposes to make in it), it is necessary to please them. I will therefore, upon this subject, let you into certain *arcana*, that will be very useful for you to know, but which you must with the utmost care conceal, and never seem to know. Women, then, are only children of a larger growth; they have an entertaining tattle and sometimes wit, but for solid, reasoning good sense, I never in my life knew one that had it, or acted consequentially for four-and-twenty hours together. Some little



passion or humor always breaks in upon their best resolutions. Their beauty neglected or controverted, their age increased, or their supposed understandings depreciated, instantly kindles their little passions, and overturns any system of consequential conduct that in their most reasonable moments they might have been capable of forming. A man of sense only trifles with them, plays with them, humors and flatters them, as he does with a sprightly, forward child; but he neither consults them about, nor trusts them with, serious matters, though he often makes them believe that he does both, — which is the thing in the world that they are proud of; for they love mightily to be dabbling in business (which, by the way, they always spoil), and, being justly distrustful that men in general look upon them in a trifling light, they almost adore that man who talks more seriously to them, and who seems to consult and trust them; — I say, who seems, for weak men really do, but wise ones only seem to do it. No flattery is either too high or too low for them. They will greedily swallow the highest, and gratefully accept of the lowest; and you may safely flatter any woman, from her understanding down to the exquisite taste of her fan. Women who are either indisputably beautiful or indisputably ugly are best flattered upon the score of their understandings; but those who are in a state of mediocrity are best flattered upon their beauty, or at least their graces; for every woman who is not absolutely ugly thinks herself handsome, but, not hearing often that she is so, is the more grateful and the more obliged to the few who tell her so; whereas a decided and conscious beauty looks upon every tribute paid to her beauty only as her due, but wants to shine and to be considered on the side of her understanding; and a woman who is ugly enough to know that she is so, knows that she has nothing left for it but her understanding, which is consequently — and probably in more senses than one — her weak side.

But these are secrets which you must keep inviolably, if you would not, like Orpheus, be torn to pieces by the whole sex. On the contrary, a man who thinks of living in the great world must be gallant, polite, and attentive to please the women. They have, from the weakness of men, more or less influence in all courts; they absolutely stamp every man's character in the *beau monde*, and make it either current, or cry it down and

stop it in payments. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to manage, please, and flatter them, and never to discover the least marks of contempt, which is what they never forgive. . . .

These are some of the hints which my long experience in the great world enables me to give you, and which, if you attend to them, may prove useful to you in your journey through it. . . .

## LXXXI

October 19, 1748.

. . . I need not, I believe, advise you to adapt your conversation to the people you are conversing with; for I suppose you would not, without this caution, have talked upon the same subject and in the same manner to a minister of state, a bishop, a philosopher, a captain, and a woman. A man of the world must, like the chameleon, be able to take every different hue, which is by no means a criminal or abject, but a necessary, complaisance, for it relates only to manners, and not to morals.

One word only as to swearing, and that I hope and believe is more than is necessary. You may sometimes hear some people in good company interlard their discourse with oaths, by way of embellishment, as they think; but you must observe, too, that those who do so are never those who contribute in any degree to give that company the denomination of good company. They are always subalterns, or people of low education; for that practice, besides that it has no one temptation to plead, is as silly and illiberal as it is wicked.

Loud laughter is the mirth of the mob, who are only pleased with silly things; for true wit or good sense never excited a laugh since the creation of the world. A man of parts and fashion is therefore only seen to smile, but never heard to laugh. . . .

## CXVII

[1749.]

. . . Men have possibly as much vanity as women, though of another kind; and both art and good breeding require that, instead of mortifying, you should please and flatter it, by words and looks of approbation. Suppose — which is by no means improbable — that, at your return to England, I should place you near the person of some one of the Royal Family. In that situation good breeding, engaging address, adorned with all the

graces that dwell at courts, would very probably make you a favorite, and, from a favorite, a minister; but all the knowledge and learning in the world, without them, never would. The penetration of princes seldom goes deeper than the surface. It is the exterior that always engages their hearts, and I would never advise you to give yourself much trouble about their understandings. Princes in general (I mean those *Porphyrogenets* who are born and bred in purple) are about the pitch of women, bred up like them, and are to be addressed and gained in the same manner. They always see, they seldom weigh. Your lustre, not your solidity, must take them; your inside will afterwards support and secure what your outside has acquired. With weak people (and they undoubtedly are three parts in four of mankind), good breeding, address, and manners are everything; they can go no deeper. But let me assure you that they are a great deal, even with people of the best understandings.

## CXXIV

December 19, 1749.

. . . I have often told you (and it is most true) that, with regard to mankind, we must not draw general conclusions from certain particular principles, though, in the main, true ones. We must not suppose that because man is a rational animal he will therefore always act rationally; or, because he has such or such a predominant passion, that he will act invariably and consequentially in the pursuit of it. No; we are complicated machines; and though we have one main-spring that gives motion to the whole, we have an infinity of little wheels which, in their turns, retard, precipitate, and sometimes stop that motion. Let us exemplify: I will suppose ambition to be — as it commonly is — the predominant passion of a minister of state, and I will suppose that minister an able one. Will he, therefore, invariably pursue the object of that predominant passion? May I be sure that he will do so and so, because he ought? Nothing less. Sickness or low spirits may damp this predominant passion; humor and peevishness may triumph over it; inferior passions may at times surprise it and prevail. Is this ambitious statesman amorous? Indiscreet and unguarded confidences, made in tender moments, to his wife or his mistress, may defeat all his schemes. Is he avaricious? Some great lucra-



tive object suddenly presenting itself may unravel all the work of his ambition. Is he passionate? Contradiction and provocation (sometimes, it may be, too, artfully intended) may extort rash and inconsiderate expressions or actions, destructive of his main object. Is he vain and open to flattery? An artful flattering favorite may mislead him. And even laziness may, at certain moments, make him neglect or omit the necessary steps to that height which he wants to arrive at. Seek first, then, for the predominant passion of the character which you mean to engage and influence, and address yourself to it, but without defying or despising the inferior passions; get them in your interest too, for now and then they will have their turns. In many cases you may not have it in your power to contribute to the gratification of the prevailing passion; then take the next best to your aid. There are many avenues to every man, and when you cannot get at him through the great one, try the serpentine ones, and you will arrive at last. . . .

# THOMAS GRAY

## LETTERS

[Gray's letters were chiefly addressed to his friends Richard West, Thomas Wharton, Horace Walpole, William Mason, and Norton Nichols. Some were published (in very imperfect form) by Mason in 1775; others in 1816, 1843, etc.]

TO RICHARD WEST

May 27, 1742.

MINE, you are to know, is a white melancholy, or rather leucocholy for the most part, which, though it seldom laughs or dances, nor ever amounts to what one calls joy or pleasure, yet is a good easy sort of state, and *ça ne laisse que de s'amuser*. The only fault is its insipidity, which is apt now and then to give a sort of *ennui*, which makes one form certain little wishes that signify nothing. But there is another sort, black indeed, which I have now and then felt, that has somewhat in it like Tertullian's rule of faith, *Credo quia impossibile est*; for it believes, nay, is sure of everything that is unlikely, so it be but frightful; and on the other hand excludes and shuts its eyes to the most possible hopes, and everything that is pleasurable. From this the Lord deliver us! for none but He and sunshiny weather can do it. In hopes of enjoying this kind of weather, I am going into the country for a few weeks, but shall be never the nearer any society; so, if you have any charity, you will continue to write. My life is like Harry the Fourth's supper of hens, "poulets à la broche, poulets en ragoût, poulets en hâchis, poulets en fricassées." Reading here, reading there; nothing but books with different sauces. Do not let me lose my desert, then; for though that be reading too, yet it has a very different flavor. . . .

TO HORACE WALPOLE

Feb. 11, 1751.

As you have brought me into a little sort of distress, you must assist me, I believe, to get out of it as well as I can. Yesterday I had the misfortune of receiving a letter from certain

gentlemen (as their bookseller expresses it) who have taken the *Magazine of Magazines* into their hands. They tell me that an "ingenious" poem, called "Reflections in a Country Church-yard," has been communicated to them, which they are printing forthwith; that they are informed that the "excellent" author of it is I by name, and that they beg not only his "indulgence," but the "honor" of his correspondence, etc. As I am not at all disposed to be either so indulgent or so correspondent as they desire, I have but one bad way left to escape the honor they would inflict upon me; and therefore am obliged to desire you would make Dodsley print it immediately (which may be done in less than a week's time) from your copy, but without my name, in what form is most convenient for him, but on his best paper and character. He must correct the press himself, and print it without any interval between the stanzas, because the sense is in some places continued beyond them; and the title must be, "Elegy, written in a Country Church-yard." If he would add a line or two to say it came into his hands by accident, I should like it better. If you behold the *Magazine of Magazines* in the light that I do, you will not refuse to give yourself this trouble on my account, which you have taken of your own accord before now. If Dodsley do not do this immediately, he may as well let it alone.

TO HORACE WALPOLE

January, 1753.

I am at present at Stoke, to which place I came at half an hour's warning upon the news I received of my mother's illness, and did not expect to have found her alive; but when I arrived she was much better, and continues so. I shall therefore be very glad to make you a visit at Strawberry Hill, whenever you give me notice of a convenient time. I am surprised at the print,<sup>1</sup> which far surpasses my idea of London graving; the drawing itself was so finished that I suppose it did not require all the art I had imagined to copy it tolerably. My aunts, seeing me open your letter, took it to be a burying ticket, and asked whether anybody had left me a ring; and so they still conceive it to be, even with all their spectacles on. Heaven forbid they should suspect it to belong to any verses of mine, —

<sup>1</sup> The proof of a print designed for the *Elegy*, representing a funeral scene.



they would burn me for a poet. . . . This I know, if you suffer my head to be printed, you will infallibly put me out of mine. I conjure you immediately to put a stop to any such design. Who is at the expense of engraving it, I know not; but if it be Dodsley, I will make up the loss to him. The thing as it was, I know, will make me ridiculous enough; but to appear in proper person, at the head of my works, consisting of half a dozen ballads in thirty pages, would be worse than the pillory. I do assure you, if I had received such a book, with such a frontispiece, without any warning, I believe it would have given me a palsy. Therefore I rejoice to have received this notice, and shall not be easy till you tell me all thoughts of it are laid aside. . . .

TO THOMAS WHARTON

Sept. 18, 1754.

I rejoice to find you at last settled to your heart's content, and delight to hear you talk of giving your house some "Gothic ornaments" already. If you project anything, I hope it will be entirely within doors; and don't let me (when I come gaping into Coleman Street) be directed to the gentleman's at the Ten Pinnacles, or with the church porch at his door. I am glad you enter into the spirit of Strawberry Castle.<sup>1</sup> It has a purity and propriety of Gothicism in it (with very few exceptions) that I have not seen elsewhere. The eating-room and library were not completed when I was there, and I want to know what effect they have. My Lord Radnor's vagaries, I see, did not keep you from doing justice to his situation, which far surpasses everything near it; and I do not know a more *laughing* scene than that about Twickenham and Richmond. . . .

TO REV. WILLIAM MASON<sup>2</sup>

Dec. 19, 1757.

Though I very well know the bland, emollient, saponaceous qualities of both sack and silver, yet if any great man would say to me, "I make you rat-catcher to his Majesty, with a salary of £300 a year and two butts of the best Malaga; and though it has been usual to catch a mouse or two, for form's sake, in pub-

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's country-seat. See his letter, page 469, below.

<sup>2</sup> At the time when Gray's name had been mentioned for the vacant post of Poet Laureate.

lic once a year, yet to you, sir, we shall not stand upon these things," I cannot say I should jump at it. Nay, if they would drop the very name of the office, and call me *Sinecure* to the King's Majesty, I should still feel a little awkward, and think everybody I saw smelt a rat about me. But I do not pretend to blame any one else that has not the same sensations; for my part I would rather be sergeant trumpeter or pinmaker to the palace. Nevertheless I interest myself a little in the history of it, and rather wish somebody may accept it that will retrieve the credit of the thing, if it be retrievable, or ever had any credit. Rowe was, I think, the last man of character that had it. As to Settle, whom you mention, he belonged to my Lord Mayor, not to the king. Eusden was a person of great hopes in his youth, though at last he turned out a drunken parson. Dryden was as disgraceful to the office, from his character, as the poorest scribbler could have been from his verses. The office itself has always humbled the professor hitherto (even in an age when kings were somebody), if he were a poor writer by making him more conspicuous, and if he were a good one by setting him at war with the little fry of his own profession, — for there are poets little enough to envy even a poet laureate. . . .

TO RICHARD STONEHEWER

August 18, 1758.

. . . You say you cannot conceive how Lord Shaftesbury came to be a philosopher in vogue. I will tell you. First, he was a lord; 2dly, he was as vain as any of his readers; 3dly, men are very prone to believe what they do not understand; 4thly, they will believe anything at all, provided they are under no obligation to believe it; 5thly, they love to take a new road, even when that road leads nowhere; 6thly, he was reckoned a fine writer, and seemed always to mean more than he said. Would you have any more reasons? An interval of above forty years has pretty well destroyed the charm. A dead lord ranks but with commoners; vanity is no longer interested in the matter, for the new road has become an old one. The mode of free-thinking is like that of ruffs and farthingales, and has given place to the mode of not thinking at all. Once it was reckoned graceful half to discover and half conceal the mind, but now we have been long accustomed to see it quite naked; primness

and affectation of style, like the good breeding of Queen Anne's court, has turned to hoydening and rude familiarity. . . .

TO HORACE WALPOLE

[1760.]

I am so charmed with the two specimens of Erse poetry,<sup>1</sup> that I cannot help giving you the trouble to enquire a little farther about them, and should wish to see a few lines of the original, that I may form some slight idea of the language, the measures, and the rhythm.

Is there anything known of the author or authors, and of what antiquity are they supposed to be? Is there any more to be had of equal beauty, or at all approaching to it? I have been often told that the poem called "Hardicanute"<sup>2</sup> (which I always admired and still admire) was the work of somebody that lived a few years ago. This I do not at all believe, though it has evidently been retouched in places by some modern hand. But however, I am authorized by this report to ask whether the two poems in question are certainly antique and genuine. I make this inquiry in quality of an antiquary, and am not otherwise concerned about it; for if I were sure that any one now living in Scotland had written them, to divert himself and laugh at the credulity of the world, I would undertake a journey into the Highlands only for the pleasure of seeing him.

TO THOMAS WHARTON

[1760.]

. . . If you have seen Stonehewer he has probably told you of my old Scotch (or rather Irish) poetry. I am gone mad about them. They are said to be translations (literal and in prose) from the Erse tongue, done by one Macpherson, a young clergyman in the Highlands. He means to publish a collection he has of these specimens of antiquity, if it be antiquity; but what plagues me is, I cannot come at any certainty on that head. I was so struck, so *extasié* with their infinite beauty, that I writ into Scotland to make a thousand inquiries. The letters I have in return are ill wrote, ill reasoned, unsatisfactory, calculated (one would imagine) to deceive one, and yet not cunning enough

<sup>1</sup> Some of Macpherson's Ossianic papers, still unpublished.

<sup>2</sup> Made public by Lady Elizabeth Wardlaw, and published in 1719 as an ancient poem; supposed to be largely her own work.



to do it cleverly. In short, the whole external evidence would make one believe these fragments (for so he calls them, though nothing can be more entire) counterfeit; but the internal is so strong on the other side, that I am resolved to believe them genuine, spite of the Devil and the Kirk. It is impossible to convince me that they were invented by the same man that writes me these letters. On the other hand it is almost as hard to suppose, if they are original, that he should be able to translate them so admirably. What can one do? Since Stonehewer went, I have received another of a very different and inferior kind (being merely descriptive), — much more modern than the former, he says, yet very old too; this too in its way is extremely fine. In short this man is the very Dæmon of poetry, or he has lighted on a treasure hid for ages. . . .

TO HORACE WALPOLE

Feb. 25, 1768.

To your friendly accusation I am glad I can plead not guilty with a safe conscience. Dodsley told me in the spring that the plates from Mr. Bentley's designs<sup>1</sup> were worn out, and he wanted to have them copied and reduced to a smaller scale for a new edition. I dissuaded him from so silly an expense, and desired he would put in no ornaments at all. The "Long Story" was to be totally omitted, as its only use — that of explaining the prints — was gone; but to supply the place of it in bulk, lest my "works" should be mistaken for the works of a flea or a pismire, I promised to send him an equal weight of poetry or prose. So, since my return hither, I put up about two ounces of stuff, viz. the "Fatal Sisters," the "Descent of Odin" (of both which you have copies), a bit of something from the Welsh, and certain little notes, partly from justice — to acknowledge the debt where I had borrowed anything, — partly from ill temper, just to tell the gentle reader that Edward I was not Oliver Cromwell, nor Queen Elizabeth the Witch of Endor. This is literally all; and with all this, I shall be but a shrimp of an author. I gave leave also to print the same thing at Glasgow, but I doubt my packet has miscarried, for I hear nothing of its arrival as yet. To what you say to me so civilly, that I ought to

<sup>1</sup> One of Gray's volumes (1753) had been published under the title *Designs by Mr. R. Bentley for Six Poems by Mr. T. Gray*.

write more, I reply in your own words (like the pamphleteer, who is going to confute you out of your own mouth), What has one to do, when "turned of fifty," but really to think of finishing? However, I will be candid, for you seem to be so with me, and avow to you that till fourscore-and-ten, whenever the humor takes me, I will write, because I like it; and because I like myself much better when I do so. If I do not write much, it is because I cannot. . . .

Mr. Boswell's book<sup>1</sup> I was going to recommend to you, when I received your letter; it has pleased and moved me strangely, — all, I mean, that relates to Paoli. He is a man born two thousand years after his time! The pamphlet proves what I have always maintained, that any fool may write a most valuable book by chance, if he will only tell us what he heard and saw with veracity. Of Mr. Boswell's truth I have not the least suspicion, because I am sure he could invent nothing of this kind. The true title of this part of his work is, A Dialogue between a Green-Goose and a Hero. . . .

<sup>1</sup> *An Account of Corsica . . . and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli.*

## THOMAS WARTON

### OBSERVATIONS ON THE FAIRY QUEEN OF SPENSER

1754

[The date above given is that of the first edition of the *Observations*, but the extracts are reprinted from the enlarged edition of 1762; they include portions of Sections I and X, and of the *Postscript*. This book was the first critical work dealing with an English author to follow the methods characteristic of modern scholarship. Its appreciation of certain aspects of Spenser's poetry also gives it an important place in the history of the so-called "romantic movement."]

. . . It is absurd to think of judging either Ariosto or Spenser by precepts which they did not attend to. We who live in the days of writing by rule, are apt to try every composition by those laws which we have been taught to think the sole criterion of excellence. Critical taste is universally diffused, and we require the same order and design which every modern performance is expected to have, in poems where they never were regarded or intended. Spenser, and the same may be said of Ariosto, did not live in an age of planning. His poetry is the careless exuberance of a warm imagination and a strong sensibility. It was his business to engage the fancy, and to interest the attention, by bold and striking images, in the formation and the disposition of which little labor or art was applied. The various and the marvelous were the chief sources of delight. Hence we find our author ransacking alike the regions of reality and romance, of truth and fiction, to find the proper decorations and furniture for his fairy structure. Born in such an age, Spenser wrote rapidly from his own feelings, which at the same time were naturally noble. Exactness in his poem would have been like the cornice which a painter introduced in the grotto of Calypso. Spenser's beauties are like the flowers in Paradise,

which not nice art

In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon  
Pour'd forth profuse, on hill and dale and plain,  
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote  
The open field, or where the unpierc'd shade  
Imbrown'd the noontide bowers.



If the *Fairy Queen* be destitute of that arrangement and economy which epic severity requires, yet we scarcely regret the loss of these while their place is so amply supplied by something which more powerfully attracts us; something which engages the affections, the feelings of the heart, rather than the cold approbation of the head. If there be any poem whose graces please because they are situated beyond the reach of art, and where the force and faculties of creative imagination delight, because they are unassisted and unrestrained by those of deliberate judgment, it is this. In reading Spenser if the critic is not satisfied, yet the reader is transported. . . .

In reading the works of a poet who lived in a remote age, it is necessary that we should look back upon the customs and manners which prevailed in that age. We should endeavor to place ourselves in the writer's situation and circumstances. Hence we shall become better enabled to discover how his turn of thinking and manner of composing were influenced by familiar appearances and established objects, which are utterly different from those with which we are at present surrounded. For want of this caution, too many readers view the knights and damsels, the tournaments and enchantments, of Spenser with modern eyes, never considering that the encounters of chivalry subsisted in our author's age; that romances were then most eagerly and universally studied; and that consequently Spenser, from the fashion of the times, was induced to undertake a recital of chivalrous achievements, and to become, in short, a *romantic* poet.

Spenser in this respect copied real manners no less than Homer. A sensible historian<sup>1</sup> observes that "Homer copied true natural manners, which, however rough and uncultivated, will always form an agreeable and interesting picture; but the pencil of the English poet [Spenser] was employed in drawing the affectations and conceits and fopperies of chivalry." This, however, was nothing more than an imitation of real life; as much, at least, as the plain descriptions in Homer, which corresponded to the simplicity of manners then subsisting in Greece. Spenser, in the address of the *Shepherd's Calendar* to Sir Philip Sidney, couples his patron's learning with his skill in

<sup>1</sup> Hume.

chivalry, a topic of panegyric which would sound very odd in a modern dedication, especially before a set of pastorals. "To the noble and virtuous gentleman, most worthy of all titles, both of Learning and Chivalry, Master Philip Sidney," —

Go, little book, thyself present,  
As child whose parent is unkent.  
To him that is the president  
Of nobleness and *chivalry*.

Nor is it sufficiently considered that a popular practice of Spenser's age contributed, in a considerable degree, to make him an *allegorical* poet. We should remember that in this age allegory was applied as the subject and foundation of public shows and spectacles, which were exhibited with a magnificence superior to that of former times. The virtues and vices, distinguished by their respective emblematical types, were frequently personified, and represented by living actors. These figures bore a chief part in furnishing what they called *pageants*, which were then the principal species of entertainment, and were shown not only in private, or upon the stage, but very often in the open streets for solemnizing public occasions, or celebrating any grand event. As a proof of what is here mentioned, I refer the reader to Holinshed's Description of the *Show of Manhood and Desert*, exhibited at Norwich before Queen Elizabeth, and more particularly to that historian's account of a tourney performed by Fulke Greville, the Lords Arundel and Windsor, and Sir Philip Sidney, who are feigned to be the children of Desire, attempting to win the Fortress of Beauty. In the composition of the last spectacle no small share of poetical invention appears. . . .

After the *Fairy Queen*, allegory began to decline, and by degrees gave place to a species of poetry whose images were of the metaphysical and abstracted kind. This fashion evidently took its rise from the predominant studies of the times, in which the disquisitions of school divinity, and the perplexed subtilties of philosophic disputation, became the principal pursuits of the learned.

Then Una fair gan drop her princely mien.

James I is contemptuously called a pedantic monarch. But surely nothing could be more serviceable to the interests of

learning, at its infancy, than this supposed foible. "To stick the doctor's chair into the throne" was to patronize the literature of the times. In a more enlightened age, the same attention to letters and love of scholars might have produced proportionable effects on sciences of real utility. This cast of mind in the king, however indulged in some cases to an ostentatious affectation, was at least innocent.

Allegory, notwithstanding, unexpectedly rekindled some faint sparks of its native splendor in the *Purple Island* of Fletcher, with whom it almost as soon disappeared; when a poetry succeeded in which imagination gave way to correctness, sublimity of description to delicacy of sentiment, and majestic imagery to conceit and epigram. Poets began now to be more attentive to words than to things and objects. The nicer beauties of happy expression were preferred to the daring strokes of great conception. Satire, that bane of the sublime, was imported from France. The Muses were debauched at court, and polite life and familiar manners became their only themes. The simple dignity of Milton was either entirely neglected, or mistaken for bombast and insipidity, by the refined readers of a dissolute age, whose taste and morals were equally vitiated. . . .

. . . Mechanical critics will perhaps be disgusted at the liberties I have taken in introducing so many anecdotes of ancient chivalry. But my subject required frequent proofs of this sort. Nor could I be persuaded that such inquiries were, in other respects, either useless or ridiculous, as they tended at least to illustrate an institution of no frivolous or indifferent nature. Chivalry is commonly looked upon as a barbarous sport or extravagant amusement of the dark ages. It had, however, no small influence on the manners, policies, and constitutions of ancient times, and served many public and important purposes. It was the school of fortitude, honor, and affability. Its exercises, like the Grecian games, habituated the youth to fatigue and enterprise, and inspired the noblest sentiments of heroism. It taught gallantry and civility to a savage and ignorant people, and humanized the native ferocity of the northern nations. It conduced to refine the manners of the combatants by exciting an emulation in the devices and accoutrements, the splendor and parade, of their tilts and tournaments; while its magnifi-



cent festivals, thronged with noble dames and courteous knights, produced the first efforts of wit and fancy.

I am still further to hope that, together with other specimens of obsolete literature in general, hinted at before, the many references I have made in particular to romances, the necessary appendage of ancient chivalry, will also plead their pardon. For however monstrous and unnatural these compositions may appear to this age of reason and refinement, they merit more attention than the world is willing to bestow. They preserve many curious historical facts, and throw considerable light on the nature of the feudal system. They are the pictures of ancient usages and customs, and represent the manners, genius, and character of our ancestors. Above all, such are their terrible graces of magic and enchantment, so magnificently marvelous are their fictions and fablings, that they contribute in a wonderful degree to rouse and invigorate all the powers of imagination, to store the fancy with those sublime and alarming images which true poetry best delights to display. . . .

JOSEPH WARTON  
AN ESSAY ON THE GENIUS AND WRITINGS OF POPE  
1756, 1782

[The two volumes of this work were published with an interval of twenty-six years between them; but the opening dedication and the concluding summary, here reproduced, show the same attitude toward the nature of poetry, — anticipating certain elements of the “romantic” position.]

DEDICATION

. . . I REVERE the memory of Pope, I respect and honor his abilities; but I do not think him at the head of his profession. In other words, in that species of poetry wherein Pope excelled, he is superior to all mankind; and I only say that this species of poetry is not the most excellent one of the art.

We do not, it should seem, sufficiently attend to the difference there is betwixt a man of wit, a man of sense, and a true poet. Donne and Swift were undoubtedly men of wit, and men of sense, but what traces have they left of pure poetry? It is remarkable that Dryden said of Donne, “He was the greatest wit, though not the greatest poet, of this nation.” Fontenelle and La Motte are entitled to the former character, but what can they urge to gain the latter? Which of these characters is the most valuable and useful, is entirely out of the question; all I plead for is to have their several provinces kept distinct from each other, and to impress on the reader that a clear head and acute understanding are not sufficient, alone, to make a poet; that the most solid observations on human life, expressed with the utmost elegance and brevity, are morality, and not poetry; that the *Epistles* of Boileau in rhyme are no more poetical than the *Characters* of La Bruyère in prose; and that it is a creative and glowing *imagination, acer spiritus ac vis*, and that alone, that can stamp a writer with this exalted and very uncommon character, which so few possess, and of which so few can properly judge.

For one person who can adequately relish and enjoy a work

of imagination, twenty are to be found who can taste and judge of observations on familiar life and the manners of the age. The *Satires* of Ariosto are more read than the *Orlando Furioso*, or even Dante. Are there so many cordial admirers of Spenser and Milton as of *Hudibras*, if we strike out of the number of these supposed admirers those who appear such out of fashion, and not of feeling? Swift's *Rhapsody on Poetry* is far more popular than Akenside's noble *Ode to Lord Huntingdon*. The *Epistles on the Characters of Men and Women*, and your sprightly *Satires*, my good friend,<sup>1</sup> are more frequently perused and quoted than *L' Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* of Milton. Had you written only these satires, you would, indeed, have gained the title of a man of wit, and a man of sense, but, I am confident, would not insist on being denominated a poet merely on their account.

*Non satis est puris versum perscribere verbis.*<sup>2</sup>

It is amazing this matter should ever have been mistaken, when Horace has taken particular and repeated pains to settle and adjust the opinion in question. He has more than once disclaimed all right and title to the name of *poet* on the score of his ethic and satiric pieces.

— *Neque enim concludere versum  
Dixeris esse satis* —<sup>3</sup>

are lines often repeated, but whose meaning is not extended and weighed as it ought to be. Nothing can be more judicious than the method he prescribes, of trying whether any composition be essentially poetical or not, — which is, to drop entirely the measures and numbers, and transpose and invert the order of the words, and in this unadorned manner to peruse the passage. If there be really in it a true poetical spirit, all your inversions and transpositions will not disguise and extinguish it, but it will retain its lustre, like a diamond unset and thrown back into the rubbish of the mine.

Let us make a little experiment on the following well-known lines: "Yes, you despise the man that is confined to books, who rails at human-kind from his study, though what he learns, he speaks, and may perhaps advance some general maxims, or may be right by chance. The coxcomb bird, so grave and so talka-

<sup>1</sup> Edward Young.

<sup>2</sup> "It does not suffice to write verse in ordinary language."

<sup>3</sup> "You would not say it is enough merely to round out a verse."



tive, that cries Whore, Knave, and Cuckold, from his cage, though he rightly call many a passenger, you hold him no philosopher. And yet, such is the fate of all extremes, men may be read too much, as well as books. We grow more partial, for the sake of the observer, to observations which we ourselves make; less so to written wisdom, because another's. Maxims are drawn from notions, and those from guess."<sup>1</sup>

What shall we say of this passage? Why, that it is most excellent sense, but just as poetical as the *Qui fit Mæcnas*<sup>2</sup> of the author who recommends this method of trial. Take ten lines of the *Iliad*, *Paradise Lost*, or even of the *Georgic* of Virgil, and see whether, by any process of critical chemistry, you can lower and reduce them to the tameness of prose. You will find that they will appear like Ulysses in his disguise of rags, still a hero, though lodged in the cottage of the herdsman Eumæus.

The sublime and the pathetic are the two chief nerves of all genuine poetry. What is there transcendently sublime or pathetic in Pope? In his works there is, indeed, *nihil inane, nihil arcessitum; puro tamen fonti quam magno flumini propior*,<sup>3</sup> as the excellent Quintilian remarks of Lysias. And because I am, perhaps, unwilling to speak out in plain English, I will adopt the following passage of Voltaire, which in my opinion as exactly characterizes Pope as it does his model Boileau, for whom it was originally designed: "Incapable peut-être du sublime qui élève l'âme, et du sentiment qui l'attendrit, mais fait pour éclairer ceux à qui la nature accorda l'un et l'autre, laborieux, sévère, précis, pur, harmonieux, il devint, enfin, le poète de la Raison."

Our English poets may, I think, be disposed in four different classes and degrees. In the first class I would place our only three sublime and pathetic poets: Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton. In the second class should be ranked such as possessed the true poetical genius in a more moderate degree, but who had noble talents for moral, ethical, and panegyrical poesy. At the head of these are Dryden, Prior, Addison, Cowley, Waller, Garth, Fenton, Gay, Denham, Parnell. In the third class may be placed men of wit, of elegant taste and lively fancy in describing familiar life, though not the higher scenes of poetry.

<sup>1</sup> A paraphrase of the opening lines of Pope's *Epistle I (Moral Essays)*.

<sup>2</sup> Horace's first satire.

<sup>3</sup> "Nothing superfluous, nothing far-fetched; yet he is more like a pure spring than a great river."

Here may be numbered Butler, Swift, Rochester, Donne, Dorset, Oldham. In the fourth class, the mere versifiers, however smooth and mellifluous some of them may be thought, should be disposed; such as Pitt, Sandys, Fairfax, Broome, Buckingham, Lansdowne. This enumeration is not intended as a complete catalogue of writers, and in their proper order, but only to mark out briefly the different species of our celebrated authors. In which of these classes Pope deserves to be placed, the following work is intended to determine.

#### CONCLUSION

Thus have I endeavored to give a critical account, with freedom, but it is hoped with impartiality, of each of Pope's works; by which review it will appear that the largest portion of them is of the didactic, moral, and satiric kind, and consequently not of the most *poetic* species of poetry. Whence it is manifest that good sense and judgment were his characteristical excellencies, rather than fancy and invention; — not that the author of *The Rape of the Lock* and *Eloisa* can be thought to want imagination, but because his imagination was not his predominant talent, because he indulged it not, and because he gave not so many proofs of this talent as of the other. This turn of mind led him to admire French models; he studied Boileau attentively, formed himself upon him, as Milton formed himself upon the Grecian and Italian sons of Fancy. He stuck to describing modern manners; but those manners, because they are familiar, uniform, artificial, and polished, are in their very nature unfit for any lofty effort of the Muse. He gradually became one of the most correct, even, and exact poets that ever wrote, polishing his pieces with a care and assiduity that no business or avocation ever interrupted; so that if he does not frequently ravish and transport his reader, yet he does not disgust him with unexpected inequalities and absurd improprieties. Whatever poetical enthusiasm he actually possessed, he withheld and stifled. The perusal of him affects not our minds with such strong emotions as we feel from Homer and Milton, so that no man of a true poetical spirit is master of himself while he reads them. Hence he is a writer fit for universal perusal, adapted to all ages and stations, for the old and for the young, the man of business and the scholar. He who would think the *Fairy Queen*,

*Palamon and Arcite*, *The Tempest*, or *Comus* childish and romantic, might relish Pope. Surely it is no narrow and niggardly encomium to say he is the great Poet of Reason, the first of ethical authors in verse. And this species of writing is, after all, the surest road to an extensive reputation. It lies more level to the general capacities of men than the higher flights of more genuine poetry. We all remember when even a Churchill was more in vogue than a Gray. He that treats of fashionable follies, and the topics of the day, that describes present persons and recent events, finds many readers, whose understandings and whose passions he gratifies. The name of Chesterfield on one hand, and of Walpole on the other, failed not to make a poem bought up and talked of. And it cannot be doubted that the *Odes* of Horace which celebrated, and the *Satires* which ridiculed, well-known and real characters at Rome, were more eagerly read, and more frequently cited, than the *Æneid* and the *Georgics* of Virgil.

Where, then, according to the question proposed at the beginning of this Essay, shall we with justice be authorized to place our admired Pope? Not, assuredly, in the same rank with Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, however justly we may applaud the *Eloisa* and *Rape of the Lock*; but, considering the correctness, elegance, and utility of his works, the weight of sentiment and the knowledge of man they contain, we may venture to assign him a place next to Milton, and just above Dryden. Yet, to bring our minds steadily to make this decision, we must forget, for a moment, the divine *Music Ode* of Dryden, and may, perhaps, then be compelled to confess that, though Dryden be the greater genius, yet Pope is the better artist.

The preference here given to Pope above other modern English poets, it must be remembered, is founded on the excellencies of his works in general, and taken all together; for there are parts and passages in other modern authors, — in Young and in Thomson, for instance, — equal to any of Pope, and he has written nothing in a strain so truly sublime as *The Bard* of Gray.



## SAMUEL JOHNSON

### THE RAMBLER

[This periodical was published twice a week, from March, 1750, to March, 1752; Johnson himself writing all but five papers. See Boswell's account of its origin and character, page 630, below. In periodical form the *Rambler* papers did not circulate largely, but when collected they ran into more than ten editions during Johnson's lifetime.]

NO. 102. SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 1751

*Ipsa quoque assiduo labuntur tempora motu,  
Non secus ac flumen: neque enim consistere flumen,  
Nec levis hora potest; sed ut unda impellitur undâ,  
Urgeturque prior veniente, urgetque priorem,  
Tempora sic fugiunt pariter, pariterque sequuntur.* — OVID.

With constant motion as the moments glide,  
Behold in running life the rolling tide!  
For none can stem by art, or stop by pow'r,  
The flowing ocean, or the fleeting hour:  
But wave by wave pursued arrives on shore,  
And each impell'd behind impels before:  
So time on time revolving we descry;  
So minutes follow, and so minutes fly. — ELPHINSTON.

“LIFE,” says Seneca, “is a voyage, in the progress of which we are perpetually changing our scenes; we first leave childhood behind us, then youth, then the years of ripened manhood, then the better and more pleasing part of old age.” The perusal of this passage having incited in me a train of reflections on the state of man, — the incessant fluctuation of his wishes, the gradual change of his disposition to all external objects, and the thoughtlessness with which he floats along the stream of time, I sunk into a slumber amidst my meditations, and on a sudden found my ears filled with the tumult of labor, the shouts of alacrity, the shrieks of alarm, the whistle of winds, and the dash of waters.

My astonishment for a time repressed my curiosity; but soon recovering myself so far as to inquire whither we were

going, and what was the cause of such clamor and confusion, I was told that we were launching out into the "ocean of life"; that we had already passed the straits of infancy, in which multitudes had perished, some by the weakness and fragility of their vessels, and more by the folly, perverseness, or negligence of those who undertook to steer them; and that we were now on the main sea, abandoned to the winds and billows, without any other means of security than the care of the pilot, whom it was always in our power to choose among great numbers that offered their direction and assistance.

I then looked round with anxious eagerness; and, first turning my eyes behind me, saw a stream flowing through flowery islands, which every one that sailed along seemed to behold with pleasure, but no sooner touched than the current — which, though not noisy or turbulent, was yet irresistible — bore him away. Beyond these islands all was darkness, nor could any of the passengers describe the shore at which he first embarked.

Before me, and on each side, was an expanse of waters violently agitated, and covered with so thick a mist that the most perspicacious eye could see but a little way. It appeared to be full of rocks and whirlpools, for many sunk unexpectedly while they were courting the gale with full sails, and insulting those whom they had left behind. So numerous, indeed, were the dangers, and so thick the darkness, that no caution could confer security. Yet there were many who, by false intelligence, betrayed their followers into whirlpools, or by violence pushed those whom they found in their way against the rocks.

The current was invariable and insurmountable; but though it was impossible to sail against it, or to return to the place that was once passed, yet it was not so violent as to allow no opportunities for dexterity or courage, since, though none could retreat back from danger, yet they might often avoid it by oblique direction.

It was, however, not very common to steer with much care or prudence; for, by some universal infatuation, every man appeared to think himself safe, though he saw his consorts every moment sinking round him; and no sooner had the waves closed over them, than their fate and their misconduct were forgotten. The voyage was pursued with the same jocund confidence; every man congratulated himself upon the soundness of his

vessel, and believed himself able to stem the whirlpool in which his friend was swallowed, or glide over the rocks on which he was dashed; nor was it often observed that the sight of a wreck made any man change his course: if he turned aside for a moment, he soon forgot the rudder, and left himself again to the disposal of chance.

This negligence did not proceed from indifference, or from weariness of their present condition; for not one of those who thus rushed upon destruction, failed, when he was sinking, to call loudly upon his associates for that help which could not now be given him; and many spent their last moments in cautioning others against the folly by which they were intercepted in the midst of their course. Their benevolence was sometimes praised, but their admonitions were unregarded.

The vessels in which we had embarked, being confessedly unequal to the turbulence of the stream of life, were visibly impaired in the course of the voyage; so that every passenger was certain that, how long soever he might, by favorable accidents or by incessant vigilance, be preserved, he must sink at last.

This necessity of perishing might have been expected to sadden the gay, and intimidate the daring, at least to keep the melancholy and timorous in perpetual torments, and hinder them from any enjoyment of the varieties and gratifications which nature offered them as the solace of their labors; yet, in effect, none seemed less to expect destruction than those to whom it was most dreadful. They all had the art of concealing their danger from themselves; and those who knew their inability to bear the sight of the terrors that embarrassed their way, took care never to look forward, but found some amusement for the present moment, and generally entertained themselves by playing with HOPE, who was the constant associate of the voyage of life.

Yet all that HOPE ventured to promise, even to those whom she favored most, was, not that they should escape, but that they should sink last; and with this promise every one was satisfied, though he laughed at the rest for seeming to believe it. HOPE, indeed, apparently mocked the credulity of her companions; for, in proportion as their vessels grew leaky, she redoubled her assurances of safety; and none were more busy in making



provisions for a long voyage, than they whom all but themselves saw likely to perish soon by irreparable decay.

In the midst of the current of life was the Gulf of **INTEMPERANCE**, a dreadful whirlpool, interspersed with rocks, of which the pointed crags were concealed under water, and the tops covered with herbage, on which **EASE** spread couches of repose, and with shades where **PLEASURE** warbled the song of invitation. Within sight of these rocks all who sailed on the ocean of life must necessarily pass. **REASON**, indeed, was always at hand to steer the passengers through a narrow outlet by which they might escape; but very few could, by her entreaties or remonstrances, be induced to put the rudder into her hand, without stipulating that she should approach so near unto the rocks of **PLEASURE** that they might solace themselves with a short enjoyment of that delicious region, after which they always determined to pursue their course without any other deviation.

**REASON** was too often prevailed upon so far by these promises, as to venture her charge within the eddy of the Gulf of **INTEMPERANCE**, where, indeed, the circumvolution was weak, but yet interrupted the course of the vessel, and drew it, by insensible rotations, towards the centre. She then repented her temerity, and with all her force endeavored to retreat; but the draught of the gulf was generally too strong to be overcome, and the passenger, having danced in circles with a pleasing and giddy velocity, was at last overwhelmed and lost. Those few whom **REASON** was able to extricate generally suffered so many shocks upon the points which shot out from the rocks of **PLEASURE**, that they were unable to continue their course with the same strength and facility as before, but floated along timorously and feebly, endangered by every breeze, and shattered by every ruffle of the water, till they sunk, by slow degrees, after long struggles and innumerable expedients, always repining at their own folly, and warning others against the first approach of the Gulf of **INTEMPERANCE**.

There were artists who professed to repair the breaches and stop the leaks of the vessels which had been shattered on the rocks of **PLEASURE**. Many appeared to have great confidence in their skill, and some, indeed, were preserved by it from sinking, who had received only a single blow; but I remarked that few vessels lasted long which had been much repaired, nor was it

found that the artists themselves continued afloat longer than those who had least of their assistance.

The only advantage which, in the voyage of life, the cautious had above the negligent, was, that they sunk later, and more suddenly; for they passed forward till they had sometimes seen all those in whose company they had issued from the straits of infancy, perish in the way, and at last were overset by a cross breeze, without the toil of resistance or the anguish of expectation. But such as had often fallen against the rocks of PLEASURE commonly subsided by sensible degrees, contended long with the encroaching waters, and harassed themselves by labors that scarce HOPE herself could flatter with success.

As I was looking upon the various fate of the multitude about me, I was suddenly alarmed with an admonition from some unknown Power, "Gaze not idly upon others when thou thyself art sinking! Whence is this thoughtless tranquillity, when thou and they are equally endangered?" I looked, and, seeing the Gulf of INTEMPERANCE before me, started and awaked.

NO. 117. TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 1751

*"Ὅσσαν ἐπ' Οὐλύμπῳ μῆμασαν θέμεν· αὐτὰρ ἐπ' Ὅσση  
Πήλιον εἰροσίφυλλον, ἔν' οὐρανὸς ἀμβατὸς εἴη. — HOMER.*

The gods they challenge, and affect the skies:  
Heav'd on Olympus tott'ring Ossa stood;  
On Ossa, Pelion nods with all his wood. — POPE.

TO THE RAMBLER. SIR:

Nothing has more retarded the advancement of learning than the disposition of vulgar minds to ridicule and vilify what they cannot comprehend. All industry must be excited by hope; and as the student often proposes no other reward to himself than praise, he is easily discouraged by contempt and insult. He who brings with him into a clamorous multitude the timidity of recluse speculation, and has never hardened his front in public life, or accustomed his passions to the vicissitudes and accidents, the triumphs and defeats of mixed conversation, will blush at the stare of petulant incredulity, and suffer himself to be driven by a burst of laughter from the fortresses of demonstration. The mechanist will be afraid to assert, before hardy contradiction, the possibility of tearing down bulwarks with

a silk-worm's thread; and the astronomer of relating the rapidity of light, the distance of the fixed stars, and the height of the lunar mountains.

If I could by any efforts have shaken off this cowardice, I had not sheltered myself under a borrowed name, nor applied to you for the means of communicating to the public the theory of a garret; a subject which, except some slight and transient strictures, has been hitherto neglected by those who were best qualified to adorn it, either for want of leisure to prosecute the various researches in which a nice discussion must engage them, or because it requires such diversity of knowledge, and such extent of curiosity, as is scarcely to be found in any single intellect; or perhaps others foresaw the tumults which would be raised against them, and confined their knowledge to their own breasts, and abandoned prejudice and folly to the direction of chance.

That the professors of literature generally reside in the highest stories, has been immemorially observed. The wisdom of the ancients was well acquainted with the intellectual advantages of an elevated situation; why else were the Muses stationed on Olympus or Parnassus by those who could with equal right have raised them bowers in the vale of Tempe, or erected their altars among the flexures of Meander? Why was Jove himself nursed upon a mountain? Or why did the goddesses, when the prize of beauty was contested, try the cause upon the top of Ida? Such were the fictions by which the great masters of the earlier ages endeavored to inculcate to posterity the importance of a garret, which, though they had been long obscured by the negligence and ignorance of succeeding times, were well enforced by the celebrated symbol of Pythagoras, ἀνεμῶν πνεόντων τὴν ἡχὴν προσκίνει, "when the wind blows, worship its echo." This could not but be understood by his disciples as an inviolable injunction to live in a garret, which I have found frequently visited by the echo and the wind. Nor was the tradition wholly obliterated in the age of Augustus, for Tibullus evidently congratulates himself upon his garret, not without some allusion to the Pythagorean precept: —

*Quam juvat immiles ventos audire cubantem —  
Aut, gelidas hybernus aquas cum fuderit auster,  
Securum somnos, imbre juvante, sequi!*



How sweet in sleep to pass the careless hours,  
Lull'd by the beating winds and dashing show'rs!

And it is impossible not to discover the fondness of Lucretius, an earlier writer, for a garret, in his description of the lofty towers of serene learning, and of the pleasure with which a wise man looks down upon the confused and erratic state of the world moving below him: —

*Sed nil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere  
Edita doctrina sapientum templa serena;  
Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre  
Errare, atque viam palantis querere vitæ.*

—— 'T is sweet thy lab'ring steps to guide  
To virtue's heights, with wisdom well supplied.  
And all the magazines of learning fortified;  
From thence to look below on human kind,  
Bewilder'd in the maze of life, and blind. — DRYDEN.

The institution has, indeed, continued to our own time; the garret is still the usual receptacle of the philosopher and poet; but this, like many ancient customs, is perpetuated only by an accidental imitation, without knowledge of the original reason for which it was established.

*Causa latet; res est notissima.*

The cause is secret, but th' effect is known. — ADDISON.

Conjectures have, indeed, been advanced concerning these habitations of literature, but without much satisfaction to the judicious inquirer. Some have imagined that the garret is generally chosen by the wits as most easily rented, and concluded that no man rejoices in his ærial abode, but on the days of payment. Others suspect that a garret is chiefly convenient, as it is remoter than any other part of the house from the outer door, which is often observed to be infested by visitants, who talk incessantly of beer, or linen, or a coat, and repeat the same sounds every morning, and sometimes again in the afternoon, without any variation, except that they grow daily more importunate and clamorous, and raise their voices in time from mournful murmurs to raging vociferations. This eternal monotony is always detestable to a man whose chief pleasure is to enlarge his knowledge and vary his ideas. Others talk of free-

dom from noise, and abstraction from common business or amusements; and some, yet more visionary, tell us that the faculties are enlarged by open prospects, and that the fancy is more at liberty when the eye ranges without confinement.

These conveniences may perhaps all be found in a well-chosen garret; but surely they cannot be supposed sufficiently important to have operated unvariably upon different climates, distant ages, and separate nations. Of an universal practice, there must still be presumed an universal cause, which, however recondite and abstruse, may be perhaps reserved to make me illustrious by its discovery, and you by its promulgation.

It is universally known that the faculties of the mind are invigorated or weakened by the state of the body, and that the body is in a great measure regulated by the various compressions of the ambient element. The effects of the air in the production or cure of corporeal maladies have been acknowledged from the time of Hippocrates; but no man has yet sufficiently considered how far it may influence the operations of the genius, though every day affords instances of local understanding, of wits and reasoners, whose faculties are adapted to some single spot, and who, when they are removed to any other place, sink at once into silence and stupidity. I have discovered, by a long series of observations, that invention and elocution suffer great impediments from dense and impure vapors, and that the tenuity of a defecated air, at a proper distance from the surface of the earth, accelerates the fancy and sets at liberty those intellectual powers which were before shackled by too strong attraction, and unable to expand themselves under the pressure of a gross atmosphere. I have found dullness to quicken into sentiment in a thin ether, as water, though not very hot, boils in a receiver partly exhausted; and heads, in appearance empty, have teemed with notions upon rising ground, as the flaccid sides of a football would have swelled out into stiffness and extension.

For this reason I never think myself qualified to judge decisively of any man's faculties whom I have only known in one degree of elevation, but take some opportunity of attending him from the cellar to the garret, and try upon him all the various degrees of rarefaction and condensation, tension and laxity. If he is neither vivacious aloft, nor serious below, I then con-

sider him as hopeless; but as it seldom happens that I do not find the temper to which the texture of his brain is fitted, I accommodate him in time with a tube of mercury, first marking the points most favorable to his intellects, according to rules which I have long studied, and which I may, perhaps, reveal to mankind in a complete treatise of barometrical pneumatology.

Another cause of the gayety and sprightliness of the dwellers in garrets is probably the increase of that vertiginous motion with which we are carried round by the diurnal revolution of the earth. The power of agitation upon the spirits is well known; every man has felt his heart lightened in a rapid vehicle, or on a galloping horse; and nothing is plainer than that he who towers to the fifth story is whirled through more space by every circumrotation, than another that grovels upon the ground-floor. The nations between the tropics are known to be fiery, inconstant, inventive, and fanciful; because, living at the utmost length of the earth's diameter, they are carried about with more swiftness than those whom nature has placed nearer to the poles; and therefore, as it becomes a wise man to struggle with the inconveniences of his country, whenever celerity and acuteness are requisite, we must actuate our languor by taking a few turns round the centre in a garret.

If you imagine that I ascribe to air and motion effects which they cannot produce, I desire you to consult your own memory, and consider whether you have never known a man acquire reputation in his garret, which, when fortune or a patron had placed him upon the first floor, he was unable to maintain; and who never recovered his former vigor of understanding, till he was restored to his original situation. That a garret will make every man a wit, I am very far from supposing; I know there are some who would continue blockheads even on the summit of the Andes, or on the peak of Teneriffe. But let not any man be considered as unimprovable till this potent remedy has been tried; for perhaps he was formed to be great only in a garret, as the joiner of Aretæus was rational in no other place but his own shop.

I think a frequent removal to various distances from the centre so necessary to a just estimate of intellectual abilities, and consequently of so great use in education, that, if I hoped that the public could be persuaded to so expensive an experiment, I



would propose that there should be a cavern dug, and a tower erected, like those which Bacon describes in Solomon's house, for the expansion and concentration of understanding, according to the exigence of different employments or constitutions. Perhaps some that fume away in meditations upon time and space in the tower, might compose tables of interest at a certain depth; and he that upon level ground stagnates in silence, or creeps in narrative, might, at the height of half a mile, ferment into merriment, sparkle with repartee, and froth with declamation.

Addison observes that we may find the heat of Virgil's climate in some lines of his *Georgic*; so, when I read a composition, I immediately determine the height of the author's habitation. As an elaborate performance is commonly said to smell of the lamp, my commendation of a noble thought, a sprightly sally, or a bold figure, is to pronounce it fresh from the garret, — an expression which would break from me upon the perusal of most of your papers, did I not believe that you sometimes quit the garret, and ascend into the cockloft.

HYPERTATUS.

NO. 161. TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1751

Οἱ γὰρ φύλλων γενέη, τοίηδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν. — HOMER.

Frail as the leaves that quiver on the sprays,  
Like them man flourishes, like them decays.

MR. RAMBLER. SIR:

You have formerly observed that curiosity often terminates in barren knowledge, and that the mind is prompted to study and inquiry rather by the uneasiness of ignorance than the hope of profit. Nothing can be of less importance to any present interest, than the fortune of those who have been long lost in the grave, and from whom nothing now can be hoped or feared. Yet, to rouse the zeal of a true antiquary, little more is necessary than to mention a name which mankind have conspired to forget; he will make his way to remote scenes of action, through obscurity and contradiction, as Tully sought amidst bushes and brambles the tomb of Archimedes.

It is not easy to discover how it concerns him that gathers the produce or receives the rent of an estate, to know through what families the land has passed, who is registered in the Con-

queror's survey as its possessor, how often it has been forfeited by treason, or how often sold by prodigality. The power or wealth of the present inhabitants of a country cannot be much increased by an inquiry after the names of those barbarians who destroyed one another, twenty centuries ago, in contests for the shelter of woods or convenience of pasturage. Yet we see that no man can be at rest in the enjoyment of a new purchase, till he has learned the history of his grounds from the ancient inhabitants of the parish, and that no nation omits to record the actions of their ancestors, however bloody, savage, and rapacious.

The same disposition, as different opportunities call it forth, discovers itself in great or little things. I have always thought it unworthy of a wise man to slumber in total inactivity, only because he happens to have no employment equal to his ambition or genius. It is therefore my custom to apply my attention to the objects before me; and as I cannot think any place wholly unworthy of notice that affords a habitation to a man of letters, I have collected the history and antiquities of the several garrets in which I have resided.

*Quantulacunque estis, vos ego magna voco.*

How small to others, but how great to me!

Many of these narratives my industry has been able to extend to a considerable length; but the woman with whom I now lodge has lived only eighteen months in the house, and can give no account of its ancient revolutions, — the plasterer having at her entrance obliterated, by his white-wash, all the smoky memorials which former tenants had left upon the ceiling, and perhaps drawn the veil of oblivion over politicians, philosophers, and poets.

When I first cheapened my lodgings, the landlady told me that she hoped I was not an author, for the lodgers on the first floor had stipulated that the upper rooms should not be occupied by a noisy trade. I very readily promised to give no disturbance to her family, and soon despatched a bargain on the usual terms. I had not slept many nights in my new apartment before I began to inquire after my predecessors, and found my landlady, whose imagination is filled chiefly with her own affairs, very ready to give me information.

Curiosity, like all other desires, produces pain as well as pleasure. Before she began her narrative, I had heated my head with expectations of adventures and discoveries, of elegance in disguise, and learning in distress, and was somewhat mortified when I heard that the first tenant was a tailor, of whom nothing was remembered but that he complained of his room for want of light, and, after having lodged in it a month, and paid only a week's rent, pawned a piece of cloth which he was trusted to cut out, and was forced to make a precipitate retreat from this quarter of the town.

The next was a young woman newly arrived from the country, who lived for five weeks with great regularity, and became by frequent treats very much the favorite of the family, but at last received visits so frequently from a cousin in Cheapside that she brought the reputation of the house into danger, and was therefore dismissed with good advice.

The room then stood empty for a fortnight; my landlady began to think she had judged hardly, and often wished for such another lodger. At last, an elderly man of a grave aspect read the bill, and bargained for the room at the very first price that was asked. He lived in close retirement, seldom went out till evening, and then returned early, sometimes cheerful and at other times dejected. It was remarkable that, whatever he purchased, he never had small money in his pocket; and, though cool and temperate on other occasions, was always vehement and stormy till he received his change. He paid his rent with great exactness, and seldom failed once a week to requite my landlady's civility with a supper. At last — such is the fate of human felicity! — the house was alarmed at midnight by the constable, who demanded to search the garrets. My landlady, assuring him that he had mistaken the door, conducted him up stairs, where he found the tools of a coiner. But the tenant had crawled along the roof to an empty house, and escaped, — much to the joy of my landlady, who declares him a very honest man, and wonders why anybody should be hanged for making money, when such numbers are in want of it. She however confesses that she shall, for the future, always question the character of those who take her garret without beating down the price.

The bill was then placed again in the window, and the poor woman was teased for seven weeks by innumerable passengers,



who obliged her to climb with them every hour up five stories, and then disliked the prospect, hated the noise of a public street, thought the stairs narrow, objected to a low ceiling, required the walls to be hung with fresher paper, asked questions about the neighborhood, could not think of living so far from their acquaintance, wished the windows had looked to the south rather than the west, told how the door and chimney might have been better disposed, bid her half the price that she asked, or promised to give her earnest the next day, and came no more.

At last, a short, meagre man, in a tarnished waistcoat, desired to see the garret, and, when he had stipulated for two long shelves and a larger table, hired it at a low rate. When the affair was completed, he looked round him with great satisfaction, and repeated some words which the woman did not understand. In two days he brought a great box of books, took possession of his room, and lived very inoffensively, except that he frequently disturbed the inhabitants of the next floor by unseasonable noises. He was generally in bed at noon, but from evening to midnight he sometimes talked aloud with great vehemence, sometimes stamped as in rage, sometimes threw down his poker, then clattered his chairs, then sat down in deep thought, and again burst out into loud vociferations; sometimes he would sigh as oppressed with misery, and sometimes shake with convulsive laughter. When he encountered any of the family, he gave way or bowed, but rarely spoke, except that as he went up stairs he often repeated, —

*Ὅς ἐνέπρᾳτα δώματα valei*

(This habitant th'aerial regions boast);

—hard words, to which his neighbors listened so often that they learned them without understanding them. What was his employment she did not venture to ask him, but at last heard a printer's boy inquire for "the author." My landlady was very often advised to beware of this strange man, who, though he was quiet for the present, might perhaps become outrageous in the hot months. But, as she was punctually paid, she could not find any sufficient reason for dismissing him, till one night he convinced her, by setting fire to his curtains, that it was not safe to have an author for her inmate.

She had then for six weeks a succession of tenants, who left the house on Saturday, and, instead of paying their rent, stormed at their landlady. At last she took in two sisters, one of whom had spent her little fortune in procuring remedies for a lingering disease, and was now supported and attended by the other. She climbed with difficulty to the apartment, where she languished eight weeks without impatience or lamentation, except for the expense and fatigue which her sister suffered, and then calmly and contentedly expired. The sister followed her to the grave, paid the few debts which they had contracted, wiped away the tears of useless sorrow, and, returning to the business of common life, resigned to me the vacant habitation.

Such, Mr. Rambler, are the changes which have happened in the narrow space where my present fortune has fixed my residence. So true it is that amusement and instruction are always at hand for those who have skill and willingness to find them, and so just is the observation of Juvenal, that a single house will show whatever is done or suffered in the world.

I am, sir, &c.

## PREFACE TO THE DICTIONARY

1755

[On the Dictionary, see Boswell's account, page 638, below. The extract from the Preface here reprinted is the concluding portion.]

. . . THUS have I labored, by settling the orthography, displaying the analogy, regulating the structures, and ascertaining the signification of English words, to perform all the parts of a faithful lexicographer; but I have not always executed my own scheme, or satisfied my own expectations. The work, whatever proofs of diligence and attention it may exhibit, is yet capable of many improvements: the orthography which I recommend is still controvertible; the etymology which I adopt is uncertain, and perhaps frequently erroneous; the explanations are sometimes too much contracted, and sometimes too much diffused; the significations are distinguished rather with subtlety than skill, and the attention is harassed with unnecessary minuteness.

The examples are too often injudiciously truncated, and per-

haps sometimes — I hope very rarely — alleged in a mistaken sense; for in making this collection I trusted more to memory than, in a state of disquiet and embarrassment, memory can contain, and purposed to supply at the review what was left incomplete in the first transcription.

Many terms appropriated to particular occupations, though necessary and significant, are undoubtedly omitted; and of the words most studiously considered and exemplified, many senses have escaped observation.

Yet these failures, however frequent, may admit extenuation and apology. To have attempted much is always laudable, even when the enterprise is above the strength that undertakes it; to rest below his own aim is incident to every one whose fancy is active, and whose views are comprehensive; nor is any man satisfied with himself because he has done much, but because he can conceive little. When first I engaged in this work, I resolved to leave neither words nor things unexamined, and pleased myself with a prospect of the hours which I should revel away in feasts of literature, the obscure recesses of northern learning which I should enter and ransack, the treasures with which I expected every search into those neglected mines to reward my labor, and the triumph with which I should display my acquisitions to mankind. When I had thus inquired into the original of words, I resolved to show likewise my attention to things; to pierce deep into every science, to inquire the nature of every substance of which I inserted the name, to limit every idea by a definition strictly logical, and exhibit every production of art or nature in an accurate description, that my book might be in place of all other dictionaries, whether appellative or technical. But these were the dreams of a poet doomed at last to wake a lexicographer. I soon found that it is too late to look for instruments, when the work calls for execution, and that whatever abilities I had brought to my task, with those I must finally perform it. To deliberate whenever I doubted, to inquire whenever I was ignorant, would have protracted the undertaking without end, and, perhaps, without much improvement; for I did not find by my first experiments, that what I had not of my own was easily to be obtained: I saw that one inquiry only gave occasion to another, that book referred to book, that to search was not always to find, and to find was not always to be



informed; and that thus to pursue perfection was, like the first inhabitants of Arcadia, to chase the sun, which, when they had reached the hill where he seemed to rest, was still beheld at the same distance from them.

I then contracted my design, determining to confide in myself, and no longer to solicit auxiliaries, which produced more encumbrance than assistance; by this I obtained at least one advantage, that I set limits to my work, which would in time be ended, though not completed.

Despondency has never so far prevailed as to depress me to negligence; some faults will at last appear to be the effects of anxious diligence and persevering activity. The nice and subtle ramifications of meaning were not easily avoided by a mind intent upon accuracy, and convinced of the necessity of disentangling combinations and separating similitudes. Many of the distinctions which to common readers appear useless and idle, will be found real and important by men versed in the school philosophy, without which no dictionary can ever be accurately compiled, or skillfully examined.

Some senses, however, there are, which, though not the same, are yet so nearly allied that they are often confounded. Most men think indistinctly, and therefore cannot speak with exactness; and consequently some examples might be indifferently put to either signification. This uncertainty is not to be imputed to me, who do not form, but register the language; who do not teach men how they should think, but relate how they have hitherto expressed their thoughts.

The imperfect sense of some examples I lamented, but could not remedy, and hope they will be compensated by innumerable passages selected with propriety, and preserved with exactness; some shining with sparks of imagination, and some replete with treasures of wisdom.

The orthography and etymology, though imperfect, are not imperfect for want of care, but because care will not always be successful, and recollection or information come too late for use.

That many terms of art and manufacture are omitted, must be frankly acknowledged; but for this defect I may boldly allege that it was unavoidable; I could not visit caverns to learn the miner's language, nor take a voyage to perfect my skill in the dialect of navigation, nor visit the warehouses of merchants,

and shops of artificers, to gain the names of wares, tools, and operations, of which no mention is found in books. What favorable accident or easy inquiry brought within my reach, has not been neglected; but it had been a hopeless labor to glean up words by courting living information, and contesting with the sullenness of one and the roughness of another.

To furnish the Academicians *della Crusca* with words of this kind, a series of comedies called *La Fiera*, or *The Fair*, was professedly written by Buonaroti; but I had no such assistant, and therefore was content to want what they must have wanted likewise, had they not luckily been so supplied.

Nor are all words which are not found in the vocabulary to be lamented as omissions. Of the laborious and mercantile part of the people, the diction is in a great measure casual and mutable; many of their terms are formed for some temporary or local convenience, and, though current at certain times and places, are in others utterly unknown. This fugitive cant, which is always in a state of increase or decay, cannot be regarded as any part of the durable materials of a language, and therefore must be suffered to perish with other things unworthy of preservation.

Care will sometimes betray to the appearance of negligence. He that is catching opportunities which seldom occur, will suffer those to pass by unregarded, which he expects hourly to return; he that is searching for rare and remote things, will neglect those that are obvious and familiar; thus many of the most common and cursory words have been inserted with little illustration, because in gathering the authorities I forebore to copy those which I thought likely to occur whenever they were wanted. It is remarkable that, in reviewing my collection, I found the word *sea* unexemplified.

Thus it happens that in things difficult there is danger from ignorance, and in things easy from confidence; the mind, afraid of greatness and disdainful of littleness, hastily withdraws herself from painful searches, and passes with scornful rapidity over tasks not adequate to her powers; sometimes too secure for caution, and again too anxious for vigorous effort; sometimes idle in a plain path, and sometimes distracted in labyrinths, and dissipated by different intentions.

A large work is difficult because it is large, even though all its

parts might singly be performed with facility. Where there are many things to be done, each must be allowed its share of time and labor, in the proportion only which it bears to the whole; nor can it be expected that the stones which form the dome of a temple should be squared and polished like the diamond of a ring.

Of the event of this work, for which, having labored it with so much application, I cannot but have some degree of parental fondness, it is natural to form conjectures. Those who have been persuaded to think well of my design, will require that it should fix our language, and put a stop to those alterations which time and chance have hitherto been suffered to make in it without opposition. With this consequence I will confess that I flattered myself for a while; but now begin to fear that I have indulged expectation which neither reason nor experience can justify. When we see men grow old and die at a certain time one after another, from century to century, we laugh at the elixir that promises to prolong life to a thousand years; and with equal justice may the lexicographer be derided, who, being able to produce no example of a nation that has preserved their words and phrases from mutability, shall imagine that his dictionary can embalm his language, and secure it from corruption and decay, — that it is in his power to change sublunary nature, and clear the world at once from folly, vanity, and affectation.

With this hope, however, academies have been instituted, to guard the avenues of their languages, to retain fugitives, and repulse intruders; but their vigilance and activity have hitherto been vain. Sounds are too volatile and subtle for legal restraints; to enchain syllables, and to lash the wind, are equally the undertakings of pride, unwilling to measure its desires by its strength. The French language has visibly changed under the inspection of the Academy; the style of Amelot's translation of Father Paul is observed by Le Courayer to be *un peu passé*; and no Italian will maintain that the diction of any modern writer is not perceptibly different from that of Boccace, Machiavel, or Caro.

Total and sudden transformations of a language seldom happen; conquests and migrations are now very rare; but there are other causes of change, which, though slow in their operation



and invisible in their progress, are perhaps as much superior to human resistance as the revolutions of the sky or intumescence of the tide. Commerce, however necessary, however lucrative, as it depraves the manners, corrupts the language; they that have frequent intercourse with strangers, to whom they endeavor to accommodate themselves, must in time learn a mingled dialect, like the jargon which serves the traffickers on the Mediterranean and Indian coasts. This will not always be confined to the exchange, the warehouse, or the port, but will be communicated by degrees to other ranks of the people, and be at last incorporated with the current speech.

There are likewise internal causes equally forcible. The language most likely to continue long without alteration, would be that of a nation raised a little, and but a little, above barbarity, secluded from strangers, and totally employed in procuring the conveniences of life; either without books, or, like some of the Mahometan countries, with very few. Men thus busied and unlearned, having only such words as common use requires, would perhaps long continue to express the same notions by the same signs. But no such constancy can be expected in a people polished by arts, and classed by subordination, where one part of the community is sustained and accommodated by the labor of the other. Those who have much leisure to think, will always be enlarging the stock of ideas; and every increase of knowledge, whether real or fancied, will produce new words, or combination of words. When the mind is unchained from necessity, it will range after convenience; when it is left at large in the fields of speculation, it will shift opinions; as any custom is disused, the words that expressed it must perish with it; as any opinion grows popular, it will innovate speech in the same proportion as it alters practice.

As by the cultivation of various sciences a language is amplified, it will be more furnished with words deflected from their original sense; the geometrician will talk of a courtier's zenith, or the eccentric virtue of a wild hero, and the physician, of sanguine expectations and phlegmatic delays. Copiousness of speech will give opportunities to capricious choice, by which some words will be preferred, and others degraded; vicissitudes of fashion will enforce the use of new, or extend the signification of known terms. The tropes of poetry will make hourly

encroachments, and the metaphorical will become the current sense; pronunciation will be varied by levity or ignorance, and the pen must at length comply with the tongue; illiterate writers will, at one time or other, by public infatuation, rise into renown, who, not knowing the original import of words, will use them with colloquial licentiousness, confound distinction, and forget propriety. As politeness increases, some expressions will be considered as too gross and vulgar for the delicate, others as too formal and ceremonious for the gay and airy; new phrases are therefore adopted, which must for the same reasons be in time dismissed. Swift, in his petty treatise on the English language, allows that new words must sometimes be introduced, but proposes that none should be suffered to become obsolete. But what makes a word obsolete, more than general agreement to forbear it? And how shall it be continued, when it conveys an offensive idea, or recalled again into the mouths of mankind, when it has once become unfamiliar by disuse, and displeasing by unfamiliarity?

There is another cause of alteration more prevalent than any other, which yet in the present state of the world cannot be obviated. A mixture of two languages will produce a third distinct from both, and they will always be mixed, where the chief parts of education, and the most conspicuous accomplishment, is skill in ancient or in foreign tongues. He that has long cultivated another language, will find its words and combinations crowd upon his memory; and haste and negligence, refinement and affectation, will obtrude borrowed terms and exotic expressions.

The great pest of speech is frequency of translation. No book was ever turned from one language into another, without imparting something of its native idiom; this is the most mischievous and comprehensive innovation. Single words may enter by thousands, and the fabric of the tongue continue the same; but new phraseology changes much at once; — it alters not the single stones of the building, but the order of the columns. If an academy should be established for the cultivation of our style — which I, who can never wish to see dependence multiplied, hope the spirit of English liberty will hinder or destroy — let them, instead of compiling grammars and dictionaries, endeavor, with all their influence, to stop the license of transla-

tors, whose idleness and ignorance, if it be suffered to proceed, will reduce us to babble a dialect of France.

If the changes that we fear be thus irresistible, what remains but to acquiesce with silence, as in the other insurmountable distresses of humanity? It remains that we retard what we cannot repel, that we palliate what we cannot cure. Life may be lengthened by care, though death cannot be ultimately defeated; tongues, like governments, have a natural tendency to degeneration; we have long preserved our constitution, — let us make some struggles for our language.

In hope of giving longevity to that which its own nature forbids to be immortal, I have devoted this book, the labor of years, to the honor of my country, that we may no longer yield the palm of philology, without a contest, to the nations of the continent. The chief glory of every people arises from its authors. Whether I shall add anything by my own writings to the reputation of English literature, must be left to time. Much of my life has been lost under the pressures of disease; much has been trifled away; and much has always been spent in provision for the day that was passing over me; but I shall not think my employment useless or ignoble, if by my assistance foreign nations, and distant ages, gain access to the propagators of knowledge, and understand the teachers of truth; if my labors afford light to the repositories of science, and add celebrity to Bacon, to Hooker, to Milton, and to Boyle.

When I am animated by this wish, I look with pleasure on my book, however defective, and deliver it to the world with the spirit of a man that has endeavored well. That it will immediately become popular I have not promised to myself; a few wild blunders, and risible absurdities, from which no work of such multiplicity was ever free, may for a time furnish folly with laughter, and harden ignorance into contempt; but useful diligence will at last prevail, and there never can be wanting some who distinguish desert; who will consider that no dictionary of a living tongue ever can be perfect, since, while it is hastening to publication, some words are budding, and some falling away; — that a whole life cannot be spent upon syntax and etymology, and that even a whole life would not be sufficient; that he whose design includes whatever language can express, must often speak of what he does not understand; that a



writer will sometimes be hurried by eagerness to the end, and sometimes faint with weariness under a task which Scaliger compares to the labors of the anvil and the mine; that what is obvious is not always known, and what is known is not always present; that sudden fits of inadvertency will surprise vigilance, slight avocations will seduce attention, and casual eclipses of the mind will darken learning; and that the writer shall often in vain trace his memory, at the moment of need, for that which yesterday he knew with intuitive readiness, and which will come uncalled into his thoughts to-morrow.

In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the author, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceed the faults of that which it condemns, yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it that the English Dictionary was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academic bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow. It may repress the triumph of malignant criticism to observe that, if our language is not here fully displayed, I have only failed in an attempt which no human powers have hitherto completed. If the lexicons of ancient tongues, now immutably fixed, and comprised in a few volumes, be yet, after the toil of successive ages, inadequate and delusive; if the aggregated knowledge and co-operating diligence of the Italian academicians did not secure them from the censure of Beni; if the embodied critics of France, when fifty years had been spent upon their work, were obliged to change its economy, and give their second edition another form, I may surely be contented without the praise of perfection, — which if I could obtain, in this gloom of solitude, what would it avail me? I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds; I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise.

## THE IDLER

[The *Idler* papers, Johnson's last periodical writings, appeared on Saturdays, from April, 1758, to April, 1760, in Newbery's *Universal Chronicle*. Of the 103 essays all but twelve were Johnson's own.]

NO. 36. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1758

THE great differences that disturb the peace of mankind are not about ends, but means. We have all the same general desires, but how those desires shall be accomplished will forever be disputed. The ultimate purpose of government is temporal, and that of religion is eternal happiness. Hitherto we agree; but here we must part, to try, according to the endless varieties of passion and understanding combined with one another, every possible form of government and every imaginable tenet of religion.

We are told by Cumberland that *rectitude*, applied to action or contemplation, is merely metaphorical, and that as a right line describes the shortest passage from point to point, so a right action effects a good design by the fewest means; and so likewise a right opinion is that which connects distant truths by the shortest train of intermediate propositions. To find the nearest way from truth to truth, or from purpose to effect, not to use more instruments where fewer will be sufficient, — not to move by wheels and levers what will give way to the naked hand, is the great proof of a healthful and vigorous mind, neither feeble with helpless ignorance, nor overburdened with unwieldy knowledge.

But there are men who seem to think nothing so much the characteristic of a genius as to do common things in an uncommon manner; like Hudibras, to "tell the clock by algebra," or, like the lady in Dr. Young's satires, "to drink tea by stratagem"; to quit the beaten track only because it is known, and take a new path, however crooked or rough, because the straight was found out before.

Every man speaks and writes with intent to be understood; and it can seldom happen but he that understands himself might convey his notions to another, if, content to be understood, he did not seek to be admired. But when once he begins

to contrive how his sentiments may be received, not with most ease to his reader, but with most advantage to himself, he then transfers his consideration from words to sounds, from sentences to periods, and as he grows more elegant becomes less intelligible.

It is difficult to enumerate every species of authors whose labors counteract themselves: the man of exuberance and copiousness, who diffuses every thought through so many diversities of expression, that it is lost like water in a mill; the ponderous dictator of sentences, whose notions are delivered in the lump, and are, like uncoined bullion, of more weight than use; the liberal illustrator, who shows by examples and comparisons what was clearly seen when it was first proposed; and the stately son of demonstration, who proves with mathematical formality what no man has yet pretended to doubt.

There is a mode of style for which I know not that the masters of oratory have yet found a name; a style by which the most evident truths are so obscured that they can no longer be perceived, and the most familiar propositions so dignified that they cannot be known. Every other kind of eloquence is the dress of sense, but this is the mask by which a true master of his art will so effectually conceal it, that a man will as easily mistake his own positions, if he meets them thus transformed, as he may pass in a masquerade his nearest acquaintance. This style may be called the *terrific*, for its chief intention is to terrify and amaze. It may be termed the *repulsive*, for its natural effect is to drive away the reader. Or it may be distinguished, in plain English, by the denomination of the *bugbear* style, for it has more terror than danger, and will appear less formidable as it is more nearly approached.

A mother tells her infant that “two and two make four”; the child remembers the proposition, and is able to count four to all the purposes of life, till the course of his education brings him among philosophers, who fight him from his former knowledge by telling him that four is a certain aggregate of units, — that all numbers being only the repetition of an unit, which though not a number itself, is the parent, root, or original of all number, *four* is the denomination assigned to a certain number of such repetitions. The only danger is, lest, when he first hears these dreadful sounds, the pupil should run away; if he has but



the courage to stay till the conclusion, he will find that, when speculation has done its worst, two and two still make four.

An illustrious example of this species of eloquence may be found in *Letters concerning Mind*.<sup>1</sup> The author begins by declaring that "the sorts of things are, things that now are, have been, and shall be, and the things that strictly *are*." In this position, — except the last clause, in which he uses something of the scholastic language, — there is nothing but what every man has heard and imagines himself to know. But who would not believe that some wonderful novelty is presented to his intellect, when he is afterwards told, in the true bugbear style, that "the *ares*, in the former sense, are things that lie between the *have-beens* and *shall-bes*. The *have-beens* are things that are past; the *shall-bes* are things that are to come; and the things that *are*, in the latter sense, are things that have not been, nor shall be, nor stand in the midst of such as are before them or shall be after them. The things that have been and shall be have respect to present, past, and future. Those likewise that now are have, moreover, place; that, for instance, which is here, that which is to the East, that which is to the West."

All this, my dear reader, is very strange; but though it be strange it is not new. Survey these wonderful sentences again, and they will be found to contain nothing more than very plain truths, which till this author arose had always been delivered in plain language.

#### NO. 85. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1759

One of the peculiarities which distinguish the present age is the multiplication of books. Every day brings new advertisements of literary undertakings, and we are flattered with repeated promises of growing wise on easier terms than our progenitors.

How much either happiness or knowledge is advanced by this multitude of authors, it is not very easy to decide. He that teaches us anything which we knew not before, is undoubtedly to be revered as a master. He that conveys knowledge by more pleasing ways, may very properly be loved as a benefactor; and he that supplies life with innocent amusement will be certainly caressed as a pleasing companion. But few of those

<sup>1</sup> By John Petvin (1750).

who fill the world with books have any pretensions to the hope either of pleasing or instructing. They have often no other task than to lay two books before them, out of which they compile a third, without any new materials of their own, and with very little application of judgment to those which former authors have supplied.

That all compilations are useless I do not assert. Particles of science are often very widely scattered. Writers of extensive comprehension have incidental remarks upon topics very remote from the principal subject, which are often more valuable than formal treatises, and which yet are not known because they are not promised in the title. He that collects those under proper heads is very laudably employed, for, though he exerts no great abilities in the work, he facilitates the progress of others, and, by making that easy of attainment which is already written, may give some mind, more vigorous or more adventurous than his own, leisure for new thoughts and original designs.

But the collections poured lately from the press have been seldom made at any great expense of time or inquiry, and therefore only serve to distract choice without supplying any real want. It is observed that "a corrupt society has many laws," and I know not whether it is not equally true that an ignorant age has many books. When the treasures of ancient knowledge lie unexamined, and original authors are neglected and forgotten, compilers and plagiaries are encouraged, who give us again what we had before, and grow great by setting before us what our own sloth had hidden from our view.

Yet are not even these writers to be indiscriminately censured and rejected. Truth, like beauty, varies its fashions, and is best recommended by different dresses to different minds; and he that recalls the attention of mankind to any part of learning which time has left behind it, may be truly said to advance the literature of his own age. As the manners of nations vary, new topics of persuasion become necessary, and new combinations of imagery are produced; and he that can accommodate himself to the reigning taste may always have readers who perhaps would not have looked upon better performances. To exact of every man who writes that he should say something new would be to reduce authors to a small number; to oblige the most fertile genius to say only what is new would be to contract his vol-

umes to a few pages. Yet surely there ought to be some bounds to repetition. Libraries ought no more to be heaped forever with the same thoughts differently expressed, than with the same books differently decorated.

The good or evil which these secondary writers produce is seldom of any long duration. As they owe their existence to change of fashion, they commonly disappear when a new fashion becomes prevalent. The authors that in any nation last from age to age are few, because there are very few that have any other claim to notice than that they catch hold on present curiosity, and gratify some accidental desire, or produce some temporary convenience.

But, however the writers of the day may despair of future fame, they ought at least to forbear any present mischief. Though they cannot arrive at eminent heights of excellence, they might keep themselves harmless. They might take care to inform themselves before they attempt to inform others, and exert the little influence which they have for honest purposes. But such is the present state of our literature, that the ancient sage who thought "a great book a great evil" would now think the multitude of books a multitude of evils. He would consider a bulky writer who engrossed a year, and a swarm of pamphleteers who stole each an hour, as equal wasters of human life, and would make no other difference between them than between a beast of prey and a flight of locusts.

NO. 88. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1759

When the philosophers of the last age were first congregated into the Royal Society, great expectations were raised of the sudden progress of useful arts; the time was supposed to be near, when engines should turn by a perpetual motion, and health be secured by the universal medicine; when learning should be facilitated by a real character, and commerce extended by ships which could reach their ports in defiance of the tempest.

But improvement is naturally slow. The Society met and parted without any visible diminution of the miseries of life. The gout and stone were still painful, the ground that was not plowed brought no harvest, and neither oranges nor grapes would grow upon the hawthorn. At last, those who were dis-



appointed began to be angry; those likewise who hated innovation were glad to gain an opportunity of ridiculing men who had depreciated, perhaps with too much arrogance, the knowledge of antiquity. And it appears from some of their earliest apologies, that the philosophers felt with great sensibility the unwelcome importunities of those who were daily asking, "What have ye done?"

The truth is, that little had been done compared with what fame had been suffered to promise; and the question could only be answered by general apologies and by new hopes, which, when they were frustrated, gave a new occasion to the same vexatious inquiry.

This fatal question has disturbed the quiet of many other minds. He that in the latter part of his life too strictly inquires what he has done, can very seldom receive from his own heart such an account as will give him satisfaction.

We do not, indeed, so often disappoint others as ourselves. We not only think more highly than others of our own abilities, but allow ourselves to form hopes which we never communicate, and please our thoughts with employments which none ever will allot us, and with elevations to which we are never expected to rise; and when our days and years have passed away in common business or common amusements, and we find at last that we have suffered our purposes to sleep till the time of action is past, we are reproached only by our own reflections. Neither our friends nor our enemies wonder that we live and die like the rest of mankind; that we live without notice, and die without memorial; they know not what task we had proposed, and therefore cannot discern whether it is finished.

He that compares what he has done with what he has left undone, will feel the effect which must always follow the comparison of imagination with reality; he will look with contempt on his own unimportance, and wonder to what purpose he came into the world; he will repine that he shall leave behind him no evidence of his having been, that he has added nothing to the system of life, but has glided from youth to age among the crowd, without any effort for distinction.

Man is seldom willing to let fall the opinion of his own dignity, or to believe that he does little only because every individual is a very little being. He is better content to want

diligence than power, and sooner confesses the depravity of his will than the imbecility of his nature.

From this mistaken notion of human greatness it proceeds that many who pretend to have made great advances in wisdom so loudly declare that they despise themselves. If I had ever found any of the self-contemnners much irritated or pained by the consciousness of their meanness, I should have given them consolation by observing that a little more than nothing is as much as can be expected from a being who, with respect to the multitudes about him, is himself little more than nothing. Every man is obliged by the Supreme Master of the universe to improve all the opportunities of good which are afforded him, and to keep in continual activity such abilities as are bestowed upon him. But he has no reason to repine, though his abilities are small and his opportunities few. He that has improved the virtue, or advanced the happiness, of one fellow-creature, — he that has ascertained a single moral proposition, or added one useful experiment to natural knowledge, may be contented with his own performance, and, with respect to mortals like himself, may demand, like Augustus, to be dismissed at his departure with applause.

## PREFACE TO SHAKESPEARE

1765

[In 1745 Johnson published "Proposals for a New Edition of Shakespeare," and again (having laid aside the plan in the meantime) in 1756. The completed work appeared in October, 1765. The Preface includes some of Johnson's most eloquent prose; historically, his attack on the doctrine of the "unities" is of especial significance. The passages here reprinted are from the early portion, and follow the revised text of 1777, as given by Mr. Nichol Smith in his *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare*.]

. . . THE poet of whose works I have undertaken the revision may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of an established fame and prescriptive veneration. He has long outlived his century, the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit. Whatever advantages he might once derive from personal allusions, local customs, or temporary opinions, have for many years been lost; and every topic of merriment, or motive of sorrow, which the modes of artificial life

afforded him, now only obscure the scenes which they once illuminated. The effects of favor and competition are at an end; the tradition of his friendships and his enmities has perished; his works support no opinion with arguments, nor supply any faction with invectives; they can neither indulge vanity nor gratify malignity; but are read without any other reason than the desire of pleasure, and are therefore praised only as pleasure is obtained. Yet, thus unassisted by interest or passion, they have passed through variations of taste and changes of manners, and, as they devolved from one generation to another, have received new honors at every transmission.

But because human judgment, though it be gradually gaining upon certainty, never becomes infallible, and approbation, though long continued, may yet be only the approbation of prejudice or fashion, it is proper to inquire by what peculiarities of excellence Shakespeare has gained and kept the favor of his countrymen.

Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature. Particular manners can be known to few, and therefore few only can judge how nearly they are copied. The irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight awhile, by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest; but the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted, and the mind can only repose on the stability of truth.

Shakespeare is, above all writers, — at least above all modern writers, — the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpracticed by the rest of the world; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species.

It is from this wide extension of design that so much instruc-



tion is derived. It is this which fills the plays of Shakespeare with practical axioms and domestic wisdom. It was said of Euripides that every verse was a precept; and it may be said of Shakespeare that from his works may be collected a system of civil and economical prudence. Yet his real power is not shown in the splendor of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable and the tenor of his dialogue; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations will succeed like the pedant in Hierocles, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.

It will not easily be imagined how much Shakespeare excels in accommodating his sentiments to real life, but by comparing him with other authors. It was observed of the ancient schools of declamation, that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world, because he found nothing there which he should ever meet in any other place. The same remark may be applied to every stage but that of Shakespeare. The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, upon topics which will never arise in the commerce of mankind. But the dialogue of this author is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it, and is pursued with so much ease and simplicity, that it seems scarcely to claim the merit of fiction, but to have been gleaned by diligent selection out of common conversation and common occurrences.

Upon every other stage the universal agent is love, by whose power all good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a lady, and a rival into the fable; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture, and part in agony; to fill their mouths with hyperbolic joy and outrageous sorrow; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered — is the business of a modern dramatist. For this, probability is violated, life is misrepresented, and language is depraved. But love is only one of many passions; and as it has no great influence upon the sum of life, it has little operation in the dramas of a poet who caught his ideas from the living

world, and exhibited only what he saw before him. He knew that any other passion, as it was regular or exorbitant, was a cause of happiness or calamity.

Characters thus ample and general were not easily discriminated and preserved, yet perhaps no poet ever kept his personages more distinct from each other. I will not say, with Pope, that every speech may be assigned to the proper speaker, because many speeches there are which have nothing characteristic; but, perhaps, though some may be equally adapted to every person, it will be difficult to find that any can be properly transferred from the present possessor to another claimant. The choice is right, when there is reason for choice.

Other dramatists can only gain attention by hyperbolical or aggravated characters, by fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity, as the writers of barbarous romances invigorated the reader by a giant and a dwarf; and he that should form his expectations of human affairs from the play, or from the tale, would be equally deceived. Shakespeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion; even where the agency is supernatural, the dialogue is level with life. Other writers disguise the most natural passions and most frequent incidents, so that he who contemplates them in the book will not know them in the world. Shakespeare approximates the remote, and familiarizes the wonderful; the event which he represents will not happen, but, if it were possible, its effects would probably be such as he has assigned; and it may be said that he has not only shown human nature as it acts in real exigencies, but as it would be found in trials to which it cannot be exposed.

This, therefore, is the praise of Shakespeare, that his drama is the mirror of life; that he who has mazed his imagination in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in human language; by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.

His adherence to general nature has exposed him to the censure of critics who form their judgments on narrower principles. Dennis and Rymer think his Romans not sufficiently Roman,

and Voltaire censures his kings as not completely royal. Dennis is offended <sup>1</sup> that Menenius, a senator of Rome, should play the buffoon; and Voltaire perhaps thinks decency violated when the Danish usurper is represented as a drunkard. But Shakespeare always makes nature predominate over accident; and, if he preserves the essential character, is not very careful of distinctions superinduced and adventitious. His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that Rome, like every other city, had men of all dispositions; and wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him. He was inclined to show an usurper and a murderer not only odious but despicable; he therefore added drunkenness to his other qualities, knowing that kings love wine like other men, and that wine exerts its natural power upon kings. These are the petty cavils of petty minds; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.

The censure which he has incurred by mixing comic and tragic scenes, as it extends to all his works, deserves more consideration. Let the fact be first stated, and then examined.

Shakespeare's plays are not, in the rigorous and critical sense, either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind, exhibiting the real state of sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of combination, and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another; in which, at the same time, the reveler is hasting to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend; in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolic of another, and many mischiefs and many benefits are done and hindered without design.

Out of this chaos of mingled purposes and casualties the ancient poets, according to the laws which custom had prescribed, selected some the crimes of men, and some their absurdities; some the momentous vicissitudes of life, and some the lighter occurrences; some the terrors of distress, and some the gayeties of prosperity. Thus rose the two modes of imitation, known by the names of *tragedy* and *comedy*, compositions in-

<sup>1</sup> See page 212, above.



tended to promote different ends by contrary means, and considered as so little allied, that I do not recollect among the Greeks or Romans a single writer who attempted both.

Shakespeare has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow not only in one mind, but in one composition. Almost all his plays are divided between serious and ludicrous characters, and, in the successive evolutions of the design, sometimes produce seriousness and sorrow, and sometimes levity and laughter.

That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed; but there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature. The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing. That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes both in its alternations of exhibition, and approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life, by showing how great machinations and slender designs may promote or obviate one another, and the high and low coöperate in the general system by unavoidable concatenation.

It is objected that by this change of scenes the passions are interrupted in their progression, and that the principal event, being not advanced by a due gradation of preparatory incidents, wants at last the power to move which constitutes the perfection of dramatic poetry. This reasoning is so specious that it is received as true even by those who in daily experience feel it to be false. The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion. Fiction cannot move so much but that the attention may be easily transferred; and though it must be allowed that pleasing melancholy be sometimes interrupted by unwelcome levity, yet let it be considered likewise that melancholy is often not pleasing, and that the disturbance of one man may be the relief of another; that different auditors have different habitudes; and that upon the whole all pleasure consists in variety.

The players who in their edition divided our author's works into comedies, histories, and tragedies, seem not to have distinguished the three kinds by any very exact or definite ideas. An action which ended happily to the principal persons, however serious or distressful through its intermediate incidents, in their opinion constituted a comedy. This idea of a comedy con-

tinued long amongst us; and plays were written which, by changing the catastrophe, were tragedies to-day and comedies to-morrow. Tragedy was not, in those times, a poem of more general dignity or elevation than comedy; it required only a calamitous conclusion, with which the common criticism of that age was satisfied, whatever lighter pleasure it afforded in its progress. History was a series of actions, with no other than chronological succession, independent on each other, and without any tendency to introduce and regulate the conclusion. It is not always very nicely distinguished from tragedy. There is not much nearer approach to unity of action in the tragedy of *Antony and Cleopatra* than in the history of *Richard the Second*. But a history might be continued through many plays; as it had no plan, it had no limits.

Through all these denominations of the drama, Shakespeare's mode of composition is the same: an interchange of seriousness and merriment, by which the mind is softened at one time, and exhilarated at another. But whatever be his purpose, whether to gladden or depress, or to conduct the story, without vehemence of emotion, through tracts of easy and familiar dialogue, he never fails to attain his purpose. As he commands us, we laugh or mourn, or sit silent with quiet expectation, in tranquillity without indifference.

When Shakespeare's plan is understood, most of the criticisms of Rymer and Voltaire vanish away. The play of *Hamlet* is opened, without impropriety, by two sentinels; Iago bellows at Brabantio's window without injury to the scheme of the play, though in terms which a modern audience would not easily endure; the character of Polonius is seasonable and useful, and the grave-diggers themselves may be heard with applause.

Shakespeare engaged in dramatic poetry with the world open before him. The rules of the ancients were yet known to few; the public judgment was unformed; he had no example of such fame as might force him upon imitation, nor critics of such authority as might restrain his extravagance. He therefore indulged his natural disposition; and his disposition, as Rymer has remarked, led him to comedy. In tragedy he often writes, with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity; but in his comic scenes he seems to produce, without labor, what no labor can improve. In tragedy he is al-

ways struggling after some occasion to be comic; but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragic scenes there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy for the greater part by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct.

The force of his comic scenes has suffered little diminution from the changes made by a century and a half, in manners or in words. As his personages act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places; they are natural, and therefore durable. The adventitious peculiarities of personal habits are only superficial dyes, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tint, without any remains of former lustre; but the discriminations of true passion are the colors of nature: they pervade the whole mass, and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance which combined them, but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase nor suffers decay. The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabrics of other poets, passes without injury by the adamant of Shakespeare.

If there be, what I believe there is, in every nation, a style which never becomes obsolete, — a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the analogy and principles of its respective language, as to remain settled and unaltered, — this style is probably to be sought in the common intercourse of life, among those who speak only to be understood, without ambition of elegance. The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech in hope of finding or making better; those who wish for distinction forsake the vulgar, when the vulgar is right. But there is a conversation above grossness and below refinement, where propriety resides, and where this great poet seems to have gathered his comic dialogue. He is therefore more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other author equally



remote, and, among his other excellencies, deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language.

These observations are to be considered not as unexceptionably constant, but as containing general and predominant truth. Shakespeare's familiar dialogue is affirmed to be smooth and clear, yet not wholly without ruggedness or difficulty, as a country may be eminently fruitful, though it has spots unfit for cultivation. His characters are praised as natural, though their sentiments are sometimes forced and their actions improbable, as the earth upon the whole is spherical, though its surface is varied with protuberances and cavities.

Shakespeare, with his excellencies, has likewise faults, and faults sufficient to obscure and overwhelm any other merit. I shall show them in the proportion in which they appear to me, without envious malignity or superstitious veneration. No question can be more innocently discussed than a dead poet's pretensions to renown, and little regard is due to that bigotry which sets candor<sup>1</sup> higher than truth.

His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. From his writings, indeed, a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him; he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked. He carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot extenuate, for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time or place.

The plots are often so loosely formed that a very slight consideration may improve them, and so carelessly pursued that he seems not always fully to comprehend his own design. He omits opportunities of instructing or delighting, which the train of his story seems to force upon him, and apparently rejects those exhibitions which would be more affecting, for the sake of those which are more easy.

<sup>1</sup> That is, kindness.

It may be observed that in many of his plays the latter part is evidently neglected. When he found himself near the end of his work, and in view of his reward, he shortened the labor to snatch the profit. He therefore remits his efforts where he should most vigorously exert them, and his catastrophe is improbably produced or imperfectly represented.

He had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expense not only of likelihood but of possibility. These faults Pope has endeavored, with more zeal than judgment, to transfer to his imagined interpolators. We need not wonder to find Hector quoting Aristotle, when we see the loves of Theseus and Hippolyta combined with the Gothic mythology of fairies. Shakespeare, indeed, was not the only violator of chronology, for in the same age Sidney, who wanted not the advantages of learning, has, in his *Arcadia*, confounded the pastoral with the feudal times, — the days of innocence, quiet, and security with those of turbulence, violence, and adventure.

In his comic scenes he is seldom very successful when he engages his characters in reciprocations of smartness and contests of sarcasm. Their jests are commonly gross, and their pleasantry licentious; neither his gentlemen nor his ladies have much delicacy, nor are sufficiently distinguished from his clowns by any appearance of refined manners. Whether he represented the real conversation of his time is not easy to determine; the reign of Elizabeth is commonly supposed to have been a time of stateliness, formality, and reserve, yet perhaps the relaxations of that severity were not very elegant. There must, however, have been always some modes of gayety preferable to others, and a writer ought to choose the best.

In tragedy his performance seems constantly to be worse as his labor is more. The effusions of passion, which exigence forces out, are for the most part striking and energetic; but whenever he solicits his invention, or strains his faculties, the offspring of his throes is tumor, meanness, tediousness, and obscurity.

In narration he affects a disproportionate pomp of diction and a wearisome train of circumlocution, and tells the incident imperfectly, in many words, which might have been more plainly delivered in few. Narration in dramatic poetry is natu-

rally tedious, as it is unanimated and inactive, and obstructs the progress of the action; it should therefore always be rapid, and enlivened by frequent interruption. Shakespeare found it an encumbrance, and instead of lightening it by brevity, endeavored to recommend it by dignity and splendor.

His declamations or set speeches are commonly cold and weak, for his power was the power of nature. When he endeavored, like other tragic writers, to catch opportunities of amplification, and, instead of inquiring what the occasion demanded, to show how much his stores of knowledge could supply, he seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader.

It is incident to him to be now and then entangled with an unwieldy sentiment, which he cannot well express, and will not reject. He struggles with it a while, and, if it continues stubborn, comprises it in words such as occur, and leaves it to be disentangled and evolved by those who have more leisure to bestow upon it.

Not that always where the language is intricate the thought is subtle, or the image always great where the line is bulky. The equality of words to things is very often neglected, and trivial sentiments and vulgar ideas disappoint the attention, to which they are recommended by sonorous epithets and swelling figures.

But the admirers of this great poet have most reason to complain when he approaches nearest to his highest excellence, and seems fully resolved to sink them in dejection, and mollify them with tender emotions, by the fall of greatness, the danger of innocence, or the crosses of love. What he does best, he soon ceases to do. He is not soft and pathetic without some idle conceit or contemptible equivocation. He no sooner begins to move, than he counteracts himself; and terror and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity.

A quibble is to Shakespeare what luminous vapors are to the traveler: he follows it at all adventures; it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire. It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible. Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disquisition, whether he be enlarging knowledge or exalting affection,



whether he be amusing attention with incidents, or enchaining it in suspense, — let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation. A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight that he was content to purchase it by the sacrifice of reason, propriety, and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it.

It will be thought strange that, in enumerating the defects of this writer, I have not yet mentioned his neglect of the unities, — his violation of those laws which have been instituted and established by the joint authority of poets and critics.

For his other deviations from the art of writing I resign him to critical justice, without making any other demand in his favor than that which must be indulged to all human excellence, — that his virtues be rated with his failings. But from the censure which this irregularity may bring upon him, I shall, with due reverence to that learning which I must oppose, adventure to try how I can defend him.

His histories, being neither tragedies nor comedies, are not subject to any of their laws. Nothing more is necessary to all the praise they expect, than that the changes of action be so prepared as to be understood; that the incidents be various and affecting, and the characters consistent, natural, and distinct. No other unity is intended, and therefore none is to be sought.

In his other works he has well enough preserved the unity of action. He has not, indeed, an intrigue regularly perplexed and regularly unraveled; he does not endeavor to hide his design only to discover it, for this is seldom the order of real events, and Shakespeare is the poet of nature. But his plan has commonly what Aristotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end; one event is concatenated with another, and the conclusion follows by easy consequence. There are perhaps some incidents that might be spared, as in other poets there is much talk that only fills up time upon the stage; but the general system makes gradual advances, and the end of the play is the end of expectation.

To the unities of time and place he has shown no regard; and perhaps a nearer view of the principles on which they stand will diminish their value, and withdraw from them the venera-

tion which, from the time of Corneille, they have very generally received, by discovering that they have given more trouble to the poet than pleasure to the auditor.

The necessity of observing the unities of time and place arises from the supposed necessity of making the drama credible. The critics hold it impossible that an action of months or years can be possibly believed to pass in three hours; or that the spectator can suppose himself to sit in the theatre while ambassadors go and return between distant kings, while armies are levied and towns besieged, while an exile wanders and returns, or till he whom they saw courting his mistress shall lament the untimely fall of his son. The mind revolts from evident falsehood, and fiction loses its force when it departs from the resemblance of reality.

From the narrow limitation of time necessarily arises the contraction of place. The spectator who knows that he saw the first act at Alexandria cannot suppose that he sees the next at Rome, at a distance to which not the dragons of Medea could, in so short a time, have transported him. He knows with certainty that he has not changed his place, and he knows that place cannot change itself, — that what was a house cannot become a plain; that what was Thebes can never be Persepolis.

Such is the triumphant language with which a critic exults over the misery of an irregular poet, and exults commonly without resistance or reply. It is time, therefore, to tell him, by the authority of Shakespeare, that he assumes as an unquestionable principle a position which, while his breath is forming it into words, his understanding pronounces to be false. It is false that any representation is mistaken for reality; that any dramatic fable in its materiality was ever credible, or for a single moment was ever credited.

The objection arising from the impossibility of passing the first hour at Alexandria, and the next at Rome, supposes that when the play opens the spectator really imagines himself at Alexandria, and believes that his walk to the theatre has been a voyage to Egypt, and that he lives in the days of Antony and Cleopatra. Surely he that imagines this may imagine more. He that can take the stage at one time for the palace of the Ptolemies, may take it in half an hour for the promontory of Actium. Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation.

If the spectator can be once persuaded that his old acquaintance are Alexander and Cæsar, that a room illuminated with candles is the plain of Pharsalia, or the bank of Granicus, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason or of truth, and from the heights of empyrean poetry may despise the circumscriptions of terrestrial nature. There is no reason why a mind thus wandering in ecstasy should count the clock, or why an hour should not be a century in that calenture of the brain that can make the stage a field.

The truth is, that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage and that the players are only players. They come to hear a certain number of lines recited with just gesture and elegant modulation. The lines relate to some action, and an action must be in some place; but the different actions that complete a story may be in places very remote from each other; and where is the absurdity of allowing that space to represent first Athens, and then Sicily, which was always known to be neither Sicily nor Athens, but a modern theatre?

By supposition, as place is introduced, time may be extended. The time required by the fable elapses for the most part between the acts; for, of so much of the action as is represented, the real and poetical duration is the same. If, in the first act, preparations for war against Mithridates are represented to be made in Rome, the event of the war may, without absurdity, be represented, in the catastrophe, as happening in Pontus. We know that there is neither war nor preparation for war; we know that we are neither in Rome nor Pontus; that neither Mithridates nor Lucullus are before us. The drama exhibits successive imitations of successive actions; and why may not the second imitation represent an action that happened years after the first, if it be so connected with it that nothing but time can be supposed to intervene? Time is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination; a lapse of years is as easily conceived as a passage of hours. In contemplation we easily contract the time of real actions, and therefore willingly permit it to be contracted when we only see their imitation.

It will be asked how the drama moves, if it is not credited. It is credited with all the credit due to a drama. It is credited, whenever it moves, as a just picture of a real original; as repre-



senting to the auditor what he would himself feel if he were to do or suffer what is there feigned to be suffered or to be done. The reflection that strikes the heart is not that the evils before us are real evils, but that they are evils to which we ourselves may be exposed. If there be any fallacy, it is not that we fancy the players, but that we fancy ourselves unhappy for a moment; but we rather lament the possibility than suppose the presence of misery, as a mother weeps over her babe when she remembers that death may take it from her. The delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more.

Imitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind. When the imagination is recreated by a painted landscape, the trees are not supposed capable to give us shade, or the fountains coolness; but we consider how we should be pleased with such fountains playing beside us, and such woods waving over us. We are agitated in reading the history of Henry the Fifth, yet no man takes his book for the field of Agincourt. A dramatic exhibition is a book recited with concomitants that increase or diminish its effect. Familiar comedy is often more powerful on the theatre than in the page; imperial tragedy is always less. The humor of Petruchio may be heightened by grimace; but what voice or what gesture can hope to add dignity or force to the soliloquy of Cato?

A play read affects the mind like a play acted. It is therefore evident that the action is not supposed to be real; and it follows that between the acts a longer or shorter time may be allowed to pass, and that no more account of space or duration is to be taken by the auditor of a drama, than by the reader of a narrative, before whom may pass in an hour the life of a hero or the revolutions of an empire.

Whether Shakespeare knew the unities, and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide and useless to inquire. We may reasonably suppose that, when he rose to notice, he did not want the counsels and admonitions of scholars and critics, and that he at last deliberately persisted in a practice which he might have begun by chance. As nothing is essential to the fable but unity of action, and as the unities of time and place arise evi-

dently from false assumptions, and, by circumscribing the extent of the drama, lessen its variety, I cannot think it much to be lamented that they were not known by him, or not observed; nor, if such another poet could arise, should I very vehemently reproach him that his first act passed at Venice and his next in Cyprus. Such violations of rules merely positive become the comprehensive genius of Shakespeare, and such censures are suitable to the minute and slender criticism of Voltaire.

*Non usque adeo permiscuit imis  
Longus summa dies, ut non, si voce Metelli  
Serventur leges, malint a Cæsare tolli.<sup>1</sup>*

Yet when I speak thus slightly of dramatic rules, I cannot but recollect how much wit and learning may be produced against me. Before such authorities I am afraid to stand; not that I think the present question one of those that are to be decided by mere authority, but because it is to be suspected that these precepts have not been so easily received, but for better reasons than I have yet been able to find. The result of my inquiries, in which it would be ludicrous to boast of impartiality, is, that the unities of time and place are not essential to a just drama; that, though they may sometimes conduce to pleasure, they are always to be sacrificed to the nobler beauties of variety and instruction; and that a play written with nice observation of critical rules is to be contemplated as an elaborate curiosity, as the product of superfluous and ostentatious art, by which is shown rather what is possible than what is necessary.

He that, without diminution of any other excellence, shall preserve all the unities unbroken, deserves the like applause with the architect who shall display all the orders of architecture in a citadel, without any deduction from its strength. But the principal beauty of a citadel is to exclude the enemy, and the greatest graces of a play are to copy nature and instruct life.

Perhaps what I have here not dogmatically but deliberately written, may recall the principles of the drama to a new examination. I am almost frightened at my own temerity; and, when I estimate the fame and the strength of those that

<sup>1</sup> "The long day has not so confused high things with low that, if the laws were to be saved by Metellus, they would not prefer to be destroyed by Cæsar."

maintain the contrary opinion, am ready to sink down in reverential silence, as Æneas withdrew from the defense of Troy, when he saw Neptune shaking the wall, and Juno heading the besiegers. . . .

Voltaire expresses his wonder that our author's extravagancies are endured by a nation which has seen the tragedy of *Cato*. Let him be answered that Addison speaks the language of poets, and Shakespeare of men. We find in *Cato* innumerable beauties which enamor us of its author, but we see nothing that acquaints us with human sentiments or human actions. We place it with the fairest and the noblest progeny which judgment propagates by conjunction with learning; but *Othello* is the vigorous and vivacious offspring of observation impregnated by genius. *Cato* affords a splendid exhibition of artificial and fictitious manners, and delivers just and noble sentiments, in diction easy, elevated, and harmonious, but its hopes and fears communicate no vibration to the heart; the composition refers us only to the writer. We pronounce the name of *Cato*, but we think on Addison.

The work of a correct and regular writer is a garden accurately formed and diligently planted, varied with shades and scented with flowers. The composition of Shakespeare is a forest, in which oaks extend their branches, and pines tower in the air, interspersed sometimes with weeds and brambles, and sometimes giving shelter to myrtles and to roses; filling the eye with awful pomp, and gratifying the mind with endless diversity. Other poets display cabinets of precious rarities, minutely finished, wrought into shape, and polished into brightness. Shakespeare opens a mine which contains gold and diamonds in unexhaustible plenty, though clouded by incrustations, debased by impurities, and mingled with a mass of meaner minerals. . . .

## LIVES OF THE ENGLISH POETS

1779-81

[A number of London booksellers produced an edition of *The English Poets* in coöperation, and employed Dr. Johnson to write brief biographical introductions. Four volumes were published in 1779, six more in 1781. The "Prefaces Biographical and Critical" were separately published as



*Lives of the English Poets.* The poets represented were chosen by the booksellers, and for the minor ones the introductions were ordinarily brief, but in important cases they reached large proportions; and some of them — notably those on Dryden, Addison, and Pope — represent Johnson's ripest and most permanently vital criticism. That on Milton, while also admirable in parts, is distinguished more particularly by Johnson's Tory prejudices and his want of appreciation for certain aspects of poetry. The *Lives* are regularly divided into a biographical and a critical portion; the following extracts, with the exception of the first on Milton, represent only the critical portions.]

## MILTON

. . . His theological opinions are said to have been first Calvinistical, and afterwards, perhaps when he began to hate the Presbyterians, to have tended towards Arminianism. In the mixed questions of theology and government, he never thinks that he can recede far enough from popery or prelacy; but what Baudius says of Erasmus seems applicable to him: *Magis habuit quod fugeret quam quod sequeretur*.<sup>1</sup> He had determined rather what to condemn than what to approve. He has not associated himself with any denomination of Protestants; we know rather what he was not than what he was. He was not of the Church of Rome; he was not of the Church of England. To be of no church is dangerous. Religion, of which the rewards are distant, and which is animated only by faith and hope, will glide by degrees out of the mind, unless it be invigorated and re-impressed by external ordinances, by stated calls to worship, and the salutary influence of example. Milton, who appears to have had full conviction of the truth of Christianity, and to have regarded the Holy Scriptures with the profoundest veneration, to have been untainted by any heretical peculiarity of opinion, and to have lived in a confirmed belief of the immediate and occasional agency of Providence, yet grew old without any visible worship. In the distribution of his hours there was no hour of prayer, either solitary or with his household; omitting public prayers, he omitted all.

Of this omission the reason has been sought upon a supposition which ought never to be made, — that men live with their own approbation, and justify their conduct to themselves. Prayer certainly was not thought superfluous by him who represents our first parents as praying acceptably in the state of

<sup>1</sup> "He rather had something to flee than something to follow."

innocence, and efficaciously after their fall. That he lived without prayer can hardly be affirmed; his studies and meditations were an habitual prayer. The neglect of it in his family was probably a fault for which he condemned himself and which he intended to correct, but that death, as too often happens, intercepted his reformation.

His political notions were those of an acrimonious and surly republican, for which it is not known that he gave any better reason than that "a popular government was the most frugal, for the trappings of monarchy would set up an ordinary commonwealth." It is surely very shallow policy that supposes money to be the chief good; and even this, without considering that support and expense of a court is, for the most part, only a particular kind of traffic, by which money is circulated without any national impoverishment. Milton's republicanism was, I am afraid, founded in an envious hatred of greatness, and a sullen desire of independence; in petulance impatient of control, and pride disdainful of superiority. He hated monarchs in the state and prelates in the church, for he hated all whom he was required to obey. It is to be suspected that his predominant desire was to destroy rather than establish, and that he felt not so much the love of liberty as repugnance to authority.

It has been observed that they who most loudly clamor for liberty do not most liberally grant it. What we know of Milton's character in domestic relations is, that he was severe and arbitrary. His family consisted of women, and there appears in his books something like a Turkish contempt of females, as subordinate and inferior beings. That his own daughters might not break the ranks, he suffered them to be depressed by a mean and penurious education. He thought women made only for obedience, and man only for rebellion. . . .

Those who admire the beauties of this great poet sometimes force their own judgment into false approbations of his little pieces, and prevail upon themselves to think that admirable which is only singular. All that short compositions can commonly attain is neatness and elegance. Milton never learned the art of doing little things with grace; he overlooked the milder excellence of suavity and softness; he was a lion that had no skill "in dandling the kid."

One of the poems on which much praise has been bestowed is *Lycidas*; of which the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers displeasing. What beauty there is we must therefore seek in the sentiments and images. It is not to be considered as the effusion of real passion, for passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuse and Min-cius, nor tells of rough satyrs and "fauns with cloven heel." Where there is leisure for fiction, there is little grief. In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a pastoral, — easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting; whatever images it can supply are long ago exhausted; and its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. When Cowley tells of Hervey that they studied together, it is easy to suppose how much he must miss the companion of his labors and the partner of his discoveries; but what image of tenderness can be excited by these lines?

We drove afield, and both together heard  
What time the gray fly winds her sultry horn,  
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night.

We know that they never drove afield, and that they had no flocks to batten; and, though it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and remote that it is never sought, because it cannot be known when it is found.

Among the flocks, and copses, and flowers, appear the heathen deities: Jove and Phoebus, Neptune and Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery, such as a college easily supplies. Nothing can less display knowledge, or less exercise invention, than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his skill in piping; and how one god asks another god what is become of *Lycidas*, and how neither god can tell. He who thus grieves will excite no sympathy; he who thus praises will confer no honor.

This poem has yet a grosser fault. With these trifling fictions are mingled the most awful and sacred truths, such as ought never to be polluted with such irreverend combinations. The shepherd likewise is now a feeder of sheep, and afterwards an ecclesiastical pastor, a superintendent of a Christian flock.



Such equivocations are always unskillful; but here they are indecent, and at least approach to impiety, — of which, however, I believe the writer not to have been conscious.

Such is the power of reputation justly acquired, that its blaze drives away the eye from nice examination. Surely no man could have fancied that he read *Lycidas* with pleasure, had he not known the author.

Of the two pieces, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, I believe opinion is uniform; every man that reads them reads them with pleasure. The author's design is not, what Theobald has remarked, merely to show how objects derive their colors from the mind, by representing the operation of the same things upon the gay and the melancholy temper, or upon the same man as he is differently disposed; but rather how, among the successive variety of appearances, every disposition of mind takes hold on those by which it may be gratified. . . .

The *Sonnets* were written in different parts of Milton's life, upon different occasions. They deserve not any particular criticism; for of the best it can only be said that they are not bad, and perhaps only the eighth and the twenty-first are truly entitled to this slender commendation. The fabric of a sonnet, however adapted to the Italian language, has never succeeded in ours, which, having greater variety of termination, requires the rhymes to be often changed.

Those little pieces may be dispatched without much anxiety; a greater work calls for greater care. I am now to examine *Paradise Lost*, a poem which, considered with respect to design, may claim the first place, and with respect to performance, the second, among the productions of the human mind.

By the general consent of critics the first praise of genius is due to the writer of an epic poem, as it requires an assemblage of all the powers which are singly sufficient for other compositions. Poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth, by calling imagination to the help of reason. Epic poetry undertakes to teach the most important truths by the most pleasing precepts, and therefore relates some great event in the most affecting manner. History must supply the writer with the rudiments of narration, which he must improve and exalt by a nobler art, must animate by dramatic energy, and diversify by retrospection and anticipation. Morality must teach him the exact

bounds and different shades of vice and virtue. From policy, and the practice of life, he has to learn the discriminations of character and the tendency of the passions, either single or combined; and physiology must supply him with illustrations and images. To put these materials to poetical use, is required an imagination capable of painting nature and realizing fiction. Nor is he yet a poet till he has attained the whole extension of his language, distinguished all the delicacies of phrase, and all the colors of words, and learned to adjust their different sounds to all the varieties of metrical modulation.

Bossu is of opinion that the poet's first work is to find a moral, which his fable is afterwards to illustrate and establish. This seems to have been the process only of Milton; the moral of other poems is incidental and consequent, in Milton's only is it essential and intrinsic. His purpose was the most useful and the most arduous, "to vindicate the ways of God to man," — to show the reasonableness of religion, and the necessity of obedience to the divine law. To convey this moral, there must be a fable, a narration artfully constructed, so as to excite curiosity and surprise expectation. In this part of his work Milton must be confessed to have equaled every other poet. He has involved in his account of the Fall of Man the events which preceded and those that were to follow it; he has interwoven the whole system of theology with such propriety that every part appears to be necessary; and scarcely any recital is wished shorter for the sake of quickening the progress of the main action.

The subject of an epic poem is naturally an event of great importance. That of Milton is not the destruction of a city, the conduct of a colony, or the foundation of an empire. His subject is the fate of worlds, the revolutions of heaven and earth; rebellion against the supreme King, raised by the highest order of created beings; the overthrow of their host, and the punishment of their crime; the creation of a new race of reasonable creatures; their original happiness and innocence, their forfeiture of immortality, and their restoration to hope and peace.

Great events can be hastened or retarded only by persons of elevated dignity. Before the greatness displayed in Milton's poem, all other greatness shrinks away. The weakest of his

agents are the highest and noblest of human beings, the original parents of mankind; with whose actions the elements consented; on whose rectitude, or deviation of will, depended the state of terrestrial nature, and the condition of all the future inhabitants of the globe. Of the other agents in the poem, the chief are such as it is irreverence to name on slight occasions. The rest were lower powers, —

of which the least could wield  
Those elements, and arm him with the force  
Of all their regions; —

powers which only the control of Omnipotence restrains from laying creation waste, and filling the vast expanse of space with ruin and confusion. To display the motives and actions of beings thus superior, so far as human reason can examine them, or human imagination represent them, is the task which this mighty poet has undertaken and performed. . . .

The plan of *Paradise Lost* has this inconvenience, that it comprises neither human actions nor human manners. The man and woman who act and suffer are in a state which no other man or woman can ever know. The reader finds no transaction in which he can be engaged; beholds no condition in which he can by any effort of imagination place himself; he has, therefore, little natural curiosity or sympathy. We all, indeed, feel the effects of Adam's disobedience; we all sin like Adam, and like him must bewail our offenses; we have restless and insidious enemies in the fallen angels, and in the blessed spirits we have guardians and friends; in the redemption of mankind we hope to be included; and in the description of heaven and hell we are surely interested, as we are all to reside hereafter either in the regions of horror or of bliss. But these truths are too important to be new. They have been taught to our infancy; they have mingled with our solitary thoughts and familiar conversations, and are habitually interwoven with the whole texture of life. Being, therefore, not new, they raise no unaccustomed emotion in the mind. What we knew before, we cannot learn; what is not unexpected cannot surprise. . . . The want of human interest is always felt. *Paradise Lost* is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take it up again. None ever wished it longer than it is. Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure. We read Milton for



instruction, retire harassed and overburdened, and look elsewhere for recreation. We desert our master, and seek for companions. . . .

The highest praise of genius is original invention. Milton cannot be said to have contrived the structure of an epic poem, and therefore owes reverence to that vigor and amplitude of mind to which all generations must be indebted for the art of poetical narration, for the texture of the fable, the variation of incidents, the interposition of dialogue, and all the stratagems that surprise and enchain attention. But, of all the borrowers from Homer, Milton is perhaps the least indebted. He was naturally a thinker for himself, confident of his own abilities, and disdainful of help or hindrance; he did not refuse admission to the thoughts or images of his predecessors, but he did not seek them. From his contemporaries he neither courted nor received support. There is in his writings nothing by which the pride of other authors might be gratified, or favor gained; no exchange of praise nor solicitation of support. His great works were performed under discountenance, and in blindness; but difficulties vanished at his touch. He was born for whatever is arduous; and his work is not the greatest of heroic poems, only because it is not the first.

#### DRYDEN

Dryden may be properly considered as the father of English criticism, as the writer who first taught us to determine upon principles the merit of composition. Of our former poets, the greatest dramatist wrote without rules, conducted through life and nature by a genius that rarely misled and rarely deserted him. Of the rest, those who knew the laws of propriety had neglected to teach them. Two *Arts of English Poetry* were written in the days of Elizabeth, by Webb and Puttenham, from which something might be learned, and a few hints had been given by Jonson and Cowley; but Dryden's *Essay on Dramatic Poetry* was the first regular and valuable treatise on the art of writing.

He who, having formed his opinions in the present age of English literature, turns back to peruse this dialogue, will not perhaps find much increase of knowledge or much novelty of instruction. But he is to remember that critical principles were

then in the hands of a few, who had gathered them partly from the ancients, and partly from the Italians and French. The structure of dramatic poems was not then generally understood. Audiences applauded by instinct, and poets perhaps often pleased by chance. . . . To judge rightly of an author, we must transport ourselves to his time, and examine what were the wants of his contemporaries, and what were his means of supplying them. That which is easy at one time was difficult at another. Dryden at least imported his science, and gave his country what it wanted before; or rather he imported only the materials, and manufactured them by his own skill.

The dialogue on the Drama was one of his first essays of criticism, written when he was yet a timorous candidate for reputation, and therefore labored with that diligence which he might allow himself somewhat to remit, when his name gave sanction to his positions, and his awe of the public was abated, partly by custom and partly by success. It will not be easy to find, in all the opulence of our language, a treatise so artfully variegated with successive representations of opposite probabilities, so enlivened with imagery, so brightened with illustrations. His portraits of the English dramatists are wrought with great spirit and diligence. The account of Shakespeare may stand as a perpetual model of encomiastic criticism; exact without minuteness, and lofty without exaggeration. The praise lavished by Longinus, on the attestation of the heroes of Marathon by Demosthenes, fades away before it. In a few lines is exhibited a character so extensive in its comprehension, and so curious in its limitations, that nothing can be added, diminished, or reformed; nor can the editors and admirers of Shakespeare, in all their emulation of reverence, boast of much more than of having diffused and paraphrased this epitome of excellence, — of having changed Dryden's gold for baser metal, of lower value though of greater bulk.

In this, and in all his other essays on the same subject, the criticism of Dryden is the criticism of a poet; not a dull collection of theorems, not a rude detection of faults, which perhaps the censor was not able to have committed, but a gay and vigorous dissertation, where delight is mingled with instruction, and where the author proves his right of judgment by his power of performance. . . . As he had studied with great dili-

gence the art of poetry, and enlarged or rectified his notions by experience perpetually increasing, he had his mind stored with principles and observations. He poured out his knowledge with little labor; for of labor, notwithstanding the multiplicity of his productions, there is sufficient reason to suspect that he was not a lover. To write *con amore*, with fondness for the employment, with perpetual touches and retouches, with unwillingness to take leave of his own idea, and an unwearied pursuit of unattainable perfection, was, I think, no part of his character.

His criticism may be considered as general or occasional. In his general precepts, which depend upon the nature of things and the structure of the human mind, he may doubtless be safely recommended to the confidence of the reader; but his occasional and particular positions were sometimes interested, sometimes negligent, and sometimes capricious. . . . He is therefore by no means constant to himself. His defense and desertion of dramatic rhyme is generally known. Spence, in his remarks on Pope's *Odyssey*, produces what he thinks an unconquerable quotation from Dryden's Preface to the *Æneid*, in favor of translating an epic poem into blank verse; but he forgets that when his author attempted the *Iliad*, some years afterwards, he departed from his own decision and translated into rhyme. When he has any objection to obviate, or any license to defend, he is not very scrupulous about what he asserts, nor very cautious, if the present purpose be served, not to entangle himself in his own sophistries. But, when all arts are exhausted, like other hunted animals, he sometimes stands at bay; when he cannot disown the grossness of one of his plays, he declares that he knows not any law that prescribes morality to a comic poet. . . .

His literature, though not always free from ostentation, will be commonly found either obvious, and made his own by the art of dressing it; or superficial, which, by what he gives, shows what he wanted; or erroneous, hastily collected, and negligently scattered. Yet it cannot be said that his genius is ever unprovided of matter, or that his fancy languishes in penury of ideas. His works abound with knowledge, and sparkle with illustrations. There is scarcely any science or faculty that does not supply him with occasional images and lucky similitudes; every page discovers a mind very widely acquainted both with



art and nature, and in full possession of great stores of intellectual wealth. Of him that knows much it is natural to suppose that he has read with diligence; yet I rather believe that the knowledge of Dryden was gleaned from accidental intelligence and various conversation, by a quick apprehension, a judicious selection, and a happy memory, a keen appetite of knowledge, and a powerful digestion; by vigilance that permitted nothing to pass without notice, and a habit of reflection that suffered nothing useful to be lost. A mind like Dryden's, always curious, always active, to which every understanding was proud to be associated, and of which every one solicited the regard, by an ambitious display of himself, had a more pleasant, perhaps a nearer way to knowledge than by the silent progress of solitary reading. I do not suppose that he despised books, or intentionally neglected them; but that he was carried out, by the impetuosity of his genius, to more vivid and speedy instructors, and that his studies were rather desultory and fortuitous than constant and systematical. . . .

Criticism, either didactic or defensive, occupies almost all his prose, except those pages which he has devoted to his patrons; but none of his prefaces were ever thought tedious. They have not the formality of a settled style, in which the first half of the sentence betrays the other. The clauses are never balanced, nor the periods modeled; every word seems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold or languid; the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous; what is little is gay, what is great is splendid. He may be thought to mention himself too frequently; but, while he forces himself upon our esteem, we cannot refuse him to stand high in his own. Everything is excused by the play of images and the sprightliness of expression. Though all is easy, nothing is feeble; though all seems careless, there is nothing harsh; and though since his earlier works more than a century has passed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obsolete. He who writes much will not easily escape a manner, — such a recurrence of particular modes as may be easily noted. Dryden is always “another and the same”; he does not exhibit a second time the same elegancies in the same form, nor appears to have any art other than that of expressing with clearness what he thinks with vigor. His style could not easily be imitated, either seriously or ludi-

crously; for, being always equable and always varied, it has no prominent or discriminative characters. The beauty who is totally free from disproportion of parts and features cannot be ridiculed by an overcharged resemblance.

From his prose, however, Dryden derives only his accidental and secondary praise; the veneration with which his name is pronounced by every cultivator of English literature, is paid to him as he refined the language, improved the sentiments, and tuned the numbers, of English poetry.

After about half a century of forced thoughts and rugged metre, some advances towards nature and harmony had been already made by Waller and Denham; they had shown that long discourses in rhyme grew more pleasing when they were broken into couplets, and that verse consisted not only in the number but the arrangement of syllables. But though they did much, who can deny that they left much to do? Their works were not many, nor were their minds of very ample comprehension. More examples of more modes of composition were necessary for the establishment of regularity, and the introduction of propriety in word and thought.

Every language of a learned nation necessarily divides itself into diction scholastic and popular, grave and familiar, elegant and gross; and from a nice distinction of these different parts arises a great part of the beauty of style. But, if we except a few minds, the favorites of nature, to whom their own original rectitude was in the place of rules, this delicacy of selection was little known to our authors. Our speech lay before them in a heap of confusion, and every man took for every purpose what chance might offer him. There was therefore before the time of Dryden no poetical diction, no system of words at once refined from the grossness of domestic use, and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular arts. Words too familiar, or too remote, defeat the purpose of a poet. From those sounds which we hear on small or on coarse occasions, we do not easily receive strong impressions or delightful images; and words to which we are nearly strangers, whenever they occur, draw that attention on themselves which they should transmit to things. Those happy combinations of words which distinguish poetry from prose had been rarely attempted; we had few elegancies or flowers of speech. The roses had not yet

been plucked from the bramble, or different colors had not been joined to enliven one another.

It may be doubted whether Waller and Denham could have overborne the prejudices which had long prevailed, and which even then were sheltered by the protection of Cowley. The new versification, as it was called, may be considered as owing its establishment to Dryden, from whose time it is apparent that English poetry has had no tendency to relapse to its former savageness. . . .

*Absalom and Achitophel* is a work so well known that particular criticism is superfluous. If it be considered as a poem political and controversial, it will be found to comprise all the excellences of which the subject is susceptible: acrimony of censure, elegance of praise, artful delineation of characters, variety and vigor of sentiment, happy turns of language, and pleasing harmony of numbers; and all these raised to such a height as can scarcely be found in any other English composition.

It is not, however, without faults. Some lines are inelegant or improper, and too many are irreligiously licentious. The original structure of the poem was defective; allegories drawn to great length will always break; Charles could not run continually parallel with David. The subject had likewise another inconvenience: it admitted little imagery or description; and a long poem of mere sentiments easily becomes tedious. Though all the parts are forcible, and every new line kindles new rapture, the reader, if not relieved by the interposition of something that soothes the fancy, grows weary of admiration, and defers the rest. As an approach to the historical truth was necessary, the action and catastrophe were not in the poet's power; there is therefore an unpleasing disproportion between the beginning and the end. We are alarmed by a faction formed out of many sects, various in their principles but agreeing in their purpose of mischief, formidable for their numbers, and strong by their supports; while the king's friends are few and weak. The chiefs on either part are set forth to view; but when expectation is at the height, the king makes a speech, and —

Henceforth a series of new times began.

Who can forbear to think of an enchanted castle, with a wide moat and lofty battlements, walls of marble, and gates of brass,



which vanishes at once into air, when the destined knight blows his horn before it? . . .

His poem on the death of Mrs. Killigrew is undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language ever has produced. The first part flows with a torrent of enthusiasm. *Fervet immensusque ruit.*<sup>1</sup> All the stanzas, indeed, are not equal. An imperial crown cannot be one continued diamond; the gems must be held together by some less valuable matter.

In his first *Ode for Cecilia's Day*, which is lost in the splendor of the second, there are passages which would have dignified any other poet. The first stanza is vigorous and elegant, though the word *diapason* is too technical, and the rhymes are too remote from one another. . . . The conclusion is likewise striking; but it includes an image so awful in itself that it can owe little to poetry. . . .

The *Religio Laici*, which borrows its title from the *Religio Medici* of Browne, is almost the only work of Dryden which can be considered as a voluntary effusion. In this, therefore, it might be hoped that the full effulgence of his genius would be found. But unhappily the subject is rather argumentative than poetical; he intended only a specimen of metrical disputation:—

And this unpolish'd rugged verse I chose,  
As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose.

This, however, is a composition of great excellence in its kind, in which the familiar is very properly diversified with the solemn, and the grave with the humorous; in which metre has neither weakened the force nor clouded the perspicuity of argument. Nor will it be easy to find another example equally happy of this middle kind of writing, which, though prosaic in some parts, rises to high poetry in others, and neither towers to the skies nor creeps along the ground.

Of the same kind, or not far distant from it, is *The Hind and the Panther*, the longest of Dryden's original poems, — an allegory intended to comprise and to decide the controversy between the Romanists and Protestants. The scheme of the work is injudicious and incommodious; for what can be more absurd than that one beast should counsel another to rest her faith upon a Pope and Council? He seems well enough skilled in the usual

<sup>1</sup> "He foams and rushes like a huge stream." (Said of Pindar by Horace.)

topics of argument, endeavors to show the necessity of an infallible judge, and reproaches the Reformers with want of unity, but is weak enough to ask why, since we see without knowing how, we may not have an infallible judge without knowing where? The Hind at one time is afraid to drink at the common brook, because she may be worried; but, walking home with the Panther, talks by the way of the Nicene fathers, and at last declares herself to be the Catholic Church. This absurdity was very properly ridiculed in *The City Mouse and Country Mouse* of Montague and Prior, and in the detection and censure of the incongruity of the fiction chiefly consists the value of their performance. . . . The original incongruity runs through the whole; the king is now Cæsar, and now the Lion, and the name Pan is given to the Supreme Being. But when this constitutional absurdity is forgiven, the poem must be confessed to be written with great smoothness of metre, a wide extent of knowledge, and an abundant multiplicity of images. The controversy is embellished with pointed sentences, diversified by illustrations, and enlivened by sallies of invective. Some of the facts to which allusions are made are now become obscure, and perhaps there may be many satirical passages little understood. As it was by its nature a work of defiance, a composition which would naturally be examined with the utmost acrimony of criticism, it was probably labored with uncommon attention; and there are, indeed, few negligences in the subordinate parts. The original impropriety and the subsequent unpopularity of the subject, added to the ridiculousness of its first elements, has sunk it into neglect; but it may be usefully studied as an example of poetical ratiocination, in which the argument suffers little from the metre. . . .

His last work was his *Fables*, in which he gave us the first example of a mode of writing which the Italians call *refacimento*, a renovation of ancient writers by modernizing their language. Thus the old poem of Boiardo has been new dressed by Domenichi and Berni. The works of Chaucer, upon which this kind of rejuvenescence has been bestowed by Dryden, require little criticism. The tale of the cock seems hardly worth revival; and the story of *Palamon and Arcite*, containing an action unsuitable to the times in which it is placed, can hardly be suffered to pass without censure of the hyperbolical com-

mendation which Dryden has given it in the general Preface and in a poetical Dedication, — a piece where his original fondness of remote conceits seems to have revived. Of the three pieces borrowed from Boccace, *Sigismunda* may be defended by the celebrity of the story. *Theodore and Honoria*, though it contains not much moral, yet afforded opportunities of striking description. And *Cymon* was formerly a tale of such reputation that at the Revival of Letters it was translated into Latin by one of the Beroalds.

Whatever subjects employed his pen, he was still improving our measures and embellishing our language.

In this volume are interspersed some short original poems which, with his prologues, epilogues, and songs, may be comprised in Congreve's remark that even those, if he had written nothing else, would have entitled him to the praise of excellence in his kind. One composition must, however, be distinguished. The *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, perhaps the last effort of his poetry, has been always considered as exhibiting the highest flight of fancy and the exactest nicety of art. This is allowed to stand without a rival. If indeed there is any excellence beyond it, in some other of Dryden's works that excellence must be found. Compared with the ode on Killigrew, it may be pronounced perhaps superior in the whole, but without any single part equal to the first stanza of the other. It is said to have cost Dryden a fortnight's labor; but it does not want its negligences. Some of the lines are without correspondent rhymes, — a defect which I never detected but after an acquaintance of many years, and which the enthusiasm of the writer might hinder him from perceiving. His last stanza has less emotion than the former, but it is not less elegant in the diction. The conclusion is vicious; the music of Timotheus, which "raised a mortal to the skies," had only a metaphorical power; that of Cecilia, which "drew an angel down," had a real effect; the crown therefore could not reasonably be divided.

In a general survey of Dryden's labors, he appears to have a mind very comprehensive by nature, and much enriched with acquired knowledge. His compositions are the effects of a vigorous genius operating upon large materials. The power that predominated in his intellectual operations was rather strong reason than quick sensibility. Upon all occasions that were



presented, he studied rather than felt, and produced sentiments not such as Nature enforces, but meditation supplies. With the simple and elemental passions, as they spring separate in the mind, he seems not much acquainted, and seldom describes them but as they are complicated by the various relations of society, and confused in the tumults and agitations of life.

What he says of Love may contribute to the explanation of his character:—

Love various minds does variously inspire;  
It stirs in gentle bosoms gentle fire,  
Like that of incense on the altar laid;  
But raging flames tempestuous souls invade;—  
A fire which every windy passion blows,  
With pride it mounts, or with revenge it glows.

Dryden's was not one of the "gentle bosoms." Love, as it subsists in itself, with no tendency but to the person loved, and wishing only for correspondent kindness, — such love as shuts out all other interest, the love of the Golden Age, — was too soft and subtle to put his faculties in motion. He hardly conceived it but in its turbulent effervescence with some other desires — when it was inflamed by rivalry, or obstructed by difficulties; when it invigorated ambition, or exasperated revenge. He is, therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetic, and had so little sensibility of the power of effusions purely natural, that he did not esteem them in others. Simplicity gave him no pleasure; and for the first part of his life he looked on Otway with contempt, though at last, indeed very late, he confessed that in his play there was "Nature, which is the chief beauty."

We do not always know our own motives. I am not certain whether it was not rather the difficulty which he found in exhibiting the genuine operations of the heart, than a servile submission to an injudicious audience, that filled his plays with false magnificence. It was necessary to fix attention; and the mind can be captivated only by recollection or by curiosity, — by reviving natural sentiments, or impressing new appearances of things. Sentences were readier at his call than images; he could more easily fill the ear with some splendid novelty, than awaken those ideas that slumber in the heart. . . .

Of Dryden's works it was said by Pope that he "could select

from them better specimens of every mode of poetry than any other English writer could supply." Perhaps no nation ever produced a writer that enriched his language with such variety of models. To him we owe the improvement, perhaps the completion, of our metre, the refinement of our language, and much of the correctness of our sentiments. By him we were taught *sapere et fari*, — to think naturally and express forcibly. Though Davies has reasoned in rhyme before him, it may be perhaps maintained that he was the first who joined argument with poetry. He showed us the true bounds of a translator's liberty. What was said of Rome, adorned by Augustus, may be applied by an easy metaphor to English poetry embellished by Dryden: *Lateritiam invenit, marmoream reliquit*. He found it brick, and he left it marble.

## ADDISON

. . . Addison is now to be considered as a critic, — a name which the present generation is scarcely willing to allow him. His criticism is condemned as tentative or experimental, rather than scientific, and he is considered as deciding by taste rather than by principles.

It is not uncommon for those who have grown wise by the labor of others to add a little of their own, and overlook their masters. Addison is now despised by some who perhaps would never have seen his defects but by the lights which he afforded them. That he always wrote as he would think it necessary to write now, cannot be affirmed; his instructions were such as the characters of his readers made proper. That general knowledge which now circulates in common talk, was in his time rarely to be found. Men not professing learning were not ashamed of ignorance; and in the female world any acquaintance with books was distinguished only to be censured. His purpose was to infuse literary curiosity by gentle and unsuspected conveyance, into the gay, the idle, and the wealthy. He therefore presented knowledge in the most alluring form, not lofty and austere, but accessible and familiar. When he showed them their defects, he showed them likewise that they might be easily supplied. His attempt succeeded; inquiry was awakened and comprehension expanded. An emulation of intellectual elegance was excited, and from this time to our own life has been gradually exalted, and conversation purified and enlarged.

Dryden had, not many years before, scattered criticism over his prefaces with very little parsimony; but, though he sometimes condescended to be somewhat familiar, his manner was in general too scholastic for those who had yet their rudiments to learn, and found it not easy to understand their master. His observations were framed rather for those that were learning to write than for those that read only to talk. An instructor like Addison was now wanting, whose remarks, being superficial, might be easily understood, and, being just, might prepare the mind for more attainments. Had he presented *Paradise Lost* to the public with all the pomp of system and severity of science, the criticism would perhaps have been admired, and the poem still have been neglected. But by the blandishments of gentleness and facility he has made Milton an universal favorite, with whom readers of every class think it necessary to be pleased.

He descended now and then to lower disquisitions, and by a serious display of the beauties of *Chevy Chase*<sup>1</sup> exposed himself to the ridicule of Wagstaff, who bestowed a like pompous character on Tom Thumb, and to the contempt of Dennis, who, considering the fundamental position of his criticism, that *Chevy Chase* pleases, and ought to please, because it is natural, observes "that there is a way of deviating from nature by bombast or tumor, which soars above nature, and enlarges images beyond their real bulk; by affectation, which forsakes nature in quest of something unsuitable; and by imbecility, which degrades nature by faintness and diminution, by obscuring its appearances and weakening its effects." In *Chevy Chase* there is not much of either bombast or affectation, but there is chill and lifeless imbecility. The story cannot possibly be told in a manner that shall make less impression on the mind.

Before the profound observers of the present race repose too securely on the consciousness of their superiority to Addison, let them consider his Remarks on Ovid, in which may be found specimens of criticism sufficiently subtle and refined; let them peruse likewise his essays on Wit, and on the Pleasures of Imagination, in which he founds art on the base of nature, and draws the principles of invention from dispositions inherent in the mind of man, with skill and elegance such as his contemners will not easily obtain.

<sup>1</sup> See page 184, above.



As a describer of life and manners, he must be allowed to stand perhaps the first of the first rank. His humor, which, as Steele observes, is peculiar to himself, is so happily diffused as to give the grace of novelty to domestic scenes and daily occurrences. He never "outsteps the modesty of nature," nor raises merriment or wonder by the violation of truth. His figures neither divert by distortion nor amaze by aggravation. He copies life with so much fidelity that he can be hardly said to invent; yet his exhibitions have an air so much original, that it is difficult to suppose them not merely the product of imagination.

As a teacher of wisdom, he may be confidently followed. His religion has nothing in it enthusiastic or superstitious; he appears neither weakly credulous nor wantonly skeptical; his morality is neither dangerously lax nor impracticably rigid. All the enchantment of fancy, and all the cogency of argument, are employed to recommend to the reader his real interest, the care of pleasing the Author of his being. Truth is shown sometimes as the phantom of a vision, sometimes appears half veiled in an allegory, sometimes attracts regard in the robes of fancy, and sometimes steps forth in the confidence of reason. She wears a thousand dresses, and in all is pleasing.

*Mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet.*

His prose is the model of the middle style; on grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not groveling; pure without scrupulosity, and exact without apparent elaboration; always equable and always easy, without glowing words or pointed sentences. Addison never deviates from his track to snatch a grace; he seeks no ambitious ornaments, and tries no hazardous innovations. His page is always luminous, but never blazes in unexpected splendor. It was apparently his principal endeavor to avoid all harshness and severity of diction; he is therefore sometimes verbose in his transitions and connections, and sometimes descends too much to the language of conversation. Yet if his language had been less idiomatical, it might have lost somewhat of its genuine anglicism. What he attempted, he performed. He is never feeble, and he did not wish to be energetic; he is never rapid, and he never stagnates. His sentences have neither studied amplitude nor affected

brevity; his periods, though not diligently rounded, are valuable and easy. Whoever wishes to attain an English style familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison.

## POPE

... Integrity of understanding and nicety of discernment were not allotted in a less proportion to Dryden than to Pope. The rectitude of Dryden's mind was sufficiently shown by the dismissal of his poetical prejudices, and the rejection of unnatural thoughts and rugged numbers. But Dryden never desired to apply all the judgment that he had. He wrote, and professed to write, merely for the people; and when he pleased others he contented himself. He spent no time in struggles to rouse latent powers; he never attempted to make that better which was already good, nor often to mend what he must have known to be faulty. He wrote, as he tells us, with very little consideration. When occasion or necessity called upon him, he poured out what the present moment happened to supply, and, when once it had passed the press, ejected it from his mind; for when he had no pecuniary interest he had no further solicitude.

Pope was not content to satisfy. He desired to excel, and therefore always endeavored to do his best. He did not court the candor, but dared the judgment, of his reader; and, expecting no indulgence from others, he showed none to himself. He examined lines and words with minute and punctilious observation, and retouched every part with indefatigable diligence, till he had left nothing to be forgiven. For this reason he kept his pieces very long in his hands, while he considered and reconsidered them. The only poems which can be supposed to have been written with such regard to the times as might hasten their publication, were the two satires of *Thirty-eight*, of which Dodsley told me that they were brought to him by the author that they might be fairly copied. "Almost every line," he said, "was then written twice over. I gave him a clean transcript, which he sent some time afterwards to me for the press, with almost every line written twice over a second time."

His declaration that his care for his works ceased at their publication was not strictly true. His parental attention never abandoned them; what he found amiss in the first edi-

tion, he silently corrected in those that followed. He appears to have revised the *Iliad*, and freed it from some of its imperfections; and the *Essay on Criticism* received many improvements after its first appearance. It will seldom be found that he altered without adding clearness, elegance, or vigor. Pope had perhaps the judgment of Dryden; but Dryden certainly wanted the diligence of Pope.

In acquired knowledge the superiority must be allowed to Dryden, whose education was more scholastic, and who, before he became an author, had been allowed more time for study, with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumference of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation, and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope.

Poetry was not the sole praise of either, for both excelled likewise in prose; but Pope did not borrow his prose from his predecessor. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied; that of Pope is cautious and uniform. Dryden observes the motions of his own mind; Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe and leveled by the roller.

Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet, that quality without which judgment is cold and knowledge is inert, that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates, — the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred that of this poetical vigor Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more; for every other writer since Milton must give place to Pope, and even of Dryden it must be said that, if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always hasty, either excited by some external occasion, or extorted by domestic necessity; he composed without consideration and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought and all that he



gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight.

This parallel will, I hope, when it is well considered, be found just; and if the reader should suspect me, as I suspect myself, of some partial fondness for the memory of Dryden, let him not too hastily condemn me, for meditation and inquiry may perhaps show him the reasonableness of my determination . . . .

The *Essay on Man* was a work of great labor and long consideration, but certainly not the happiest of Pope's performances. The subject is perhaps not very proper for poetry, and the poet was not sufficiently master of his subject. Metaphysical morality was to him a new study; he was proud of his acquisitions, and, supposing himself master of great secrets, was in haste to teach what he had not learned. Thus he tells us, in the first Epistle, that from the nature of the Supreme Being may be deduced an order of beings such as mankind, because Infinite Excellence can do only what is best. He finds out that these beings must be "somewhere," and that "all the question is, whether man be in a wrong place." Surely if, according to the poet's Leibnitian reasoning, we may infer that man ought to be, only because he is, we may allow that his place is the right place because he has it. Supreme Wisdom is not less infallible in disposing than in creation. But what is meant by "somewhere" and "place" and "wrong place," it had been vain to ask Pope, who probably had never asked himself.

Having exalted himself into the chair of wisdom, he tells us much that every man knows, and much that he does not know himself: that we see but little, and that the order of the universe is beyond our comprehension, — an opinion not very uncommon; and that there is a chain of subordinate beings "from infinite to nothing," — of which himself and his readers are equally ignorant. But he gives us one comfort, which without his help he supposes unattainable, in the position that "though we are fools, yet God is wise."

This Essay affords an egregious instance of the predominance of genius, the dazzling splendor of imagery, and the seductive powers of eloquence. Never was penury of knowledge and vulgarity of sentiment so happily disguised. The reader feels his mind full, though he learns nothing; and, when he meets it in its new array, no longer knows the talk of his mother and his nurse. When these wonder-working sounds sink into sense, and the doctrine of the Essay, disrobed of its ornaments, is left to the powers of its naked excellence, what shall we discover? That we are, in comparison with our Creator, very weak and ignorant; that we do not uphold the chain of existence; and that we could not make one another with more skill than we are made. We may learn yet more: that the arts of human life were copied from the instinctive operations of other animals; that, if the world be made for man, it may be said that man was made for geese. To these profound principles of natural knowledge are added some moral instructions equally new: that self-interest, well understood, will produce social concord; that men are mutual gainers by mutual benefits; that evil is sometimes balanced by good; that human advantages are unstable and fallacious, of uncertain duration and doubtful effect; that our true honor is, not to have a great part, but to act it well; that virtue only is our own; and that happiness is always in our power. Surely a man of no very comprehensive search may venture to say that he has heard all this before. But it was never till now recommended by such a blaze of embellishment, or such sweetness of melody. The vigorous contraction of some thoughts, the luxuriant amplification of others, the incidental illustrations, and sometimes the dignity, sometimes the softness of the verses, enchain philosophy, suspend criticism, and oppress judgment by overpowering pleasure. This is true of many paragraphs; yet if I had undertaken to exemplify Pope's felicity of composition before a rigid critic, I should not select the *Essay on Man*; for it contains more lines unsuccessfully labored, more harshness of diction, more thoughts imperfectly expressed, more levity without elegance, and more heaviness without strength, than will easily be found in all his other works. . . .

After all this, it is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, whether Pope was a poet, otherwise

than by asking in return: If Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition will only show the narrowness of the definer, though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past; let us inquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed. Had he given the world only his version, the name of poet must have been allowed him; if the writer of the *Iliad* were to class his successors, he would assign a very high place to his translator, without requiring any other evidence of genius.



## DAVID HUME

### ESSAY ON THE STANDARD OF TASTE

1757

[This essay was first published in a volume called *Four Dissertations*, the others being on "The Natural History of Religion," "The Passions," and "Tragedy." In the following year (1758) it reappeared in the volume called *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*. Its subject-matter may be compared with Addison's essay on Taste in the *Spectator*, No. 409 (see page 204, above.)]

THE great variety of taste, as well as of opinion, which prevails in the world, is too obvious not to have fallen under every one's observation. Men of the most confined knowledge are able to remark a difference of taste in the narrow circle of their acquaintance, even where the persons have been educated under the same government and have early imbibed the same prejudices. But those who can enlarge their view to contemplate distant nations and remote ages, are still more surprised at the great inconsistency and contrariety. We are apt to call *barbarous* whatever departs widely from our own taste and apprehension, but soon find the epithet of reproach retorted on us. And the highest arrogance and self-conceit is at last started, on observing an equal assurance on all sides, and scruples, amidst such a contest of sentiment, to pronounce positively in its own favor.

As this variety of taste is obvious to the most careless inquirer, so will it be found, on examination, to be still greater in reality than in appearance. The sentiments of men often differ with regard to beauty and deformity of all kinds, even while their general discourse is the same. There are certain terms in every language which import blame, and others praise; and all men who use the same tongue must agree in their application of them. Every voice is united in applauding elegance, propriety, simplicity, spirit in writing, and in blaming fustian, affectation, coldness, and a false brilliancy. But when critics come to particulars, this seeming unanimity vanishes, and it is

found that they had affixed a very different meaning to their expressions. In all matters of opinion and science, the case is opposite; the difference among men is there oftener found to lie in generals than in particulars, and to be less in reality than in appearance. An explanation of the terms commonly ends the controversy, and the disputants are surprised to find that they had been quarreling while at bottom they agreed in their judgment. . . .

It is natural for us to seek a *standard of taste*; a rule by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled; at least a decision afforded, confirming one sentiment and condemning another.

There is a species of philosophy which cuts off all hopes of success in such an attempt, and represents the impossibility of ever attaining any standard of taste. The difference, it is said, is very wide between judgment and sentiment. All sentiment is right; because sentiment has a reference to nothing beyond itself, and is always real, wherever a man is conscious of it. But all determinations of the understanding are not right, because they have a reference to something beyond themselves, — to wit, real matter of fact, and are not always conformable to that standard. Among a thousand different opinions which different men may entertain of the same subject, there is one, and but one, that is just and true, and the only difficulty is to fix and ascertain it. On the contrary, a thousand different sentiments, excited by the same object, are all right, because no sentiment represents what is really in the object. It only marks a certain conformity or relation between the object and the organs or faculties of the mind; and if that conformity did not really exist, the sentiment could never possibly have being. Beauty is no quality in things themselves; it exists merely in the mind which contemplates them; and each mind perceives a different beauty. One person may even perceive deformity, where another is sensible of beauty; and every individual ought to acquiesce in his own sentiment, without pretending to regulate those of others. To seek the real beauty, or real deformity, is as fruitless an inquiry as to pretend to ascertain the real sweet or real bitter. According to the disposition of the organs, the same object may be both sweet and bitter, and the proverb has justly determined it to be fruitless to dispute concerning

tastes. It is very natural, and even quite necessary, to extend this axiom to mental as well as bodily taste; and thus common sense, which is so often at variance with philosophy, especially with the skeptical kind, is found in one instance at least to agree in pronouncing the same decision.

But though this axiom, by passing into a proverb, seems to have attained the sanction of common sense, there is certainly a species of common sense which opposes it, at least serves to modify and restrain it. Whoever would assert an equality of genius and elegance between Ogilby and Milton, or Bunyan and Addison, would be thought to defend no less an extravagance than if he had maintained a mole-hill to be as high as Teneriffe, or a pond as extensive as the ocean. Though there may be found persons who give the preference to the former authors, no one pays attention to such a taste, and we pronounce without scruple the sentiment of these pretended critics to be absurd and ridiculous. The principle of the natural equality of tastes is then totally forgot, and while we admit it on some occasions, where the objects seem near an equality, it appears an extravagant paradox, or rather a palpable absurdity, where objects so disproportioned are compared together.

It is evident that none of the rules of composition are fixed by reasonings *a priori*, or can be esteemed abstract conclusions of the understanding, from comparing those habitudes and relations of ideas which are eternal and immutable. Their foundation is the same with that of all the practical sciences, experience; nor are they anything but general observations concerning what has been universally found to please in all countries and in all ages. Many of the beauties of poetry and even of eloquence are founded on falsehood and fiction, on hyperboles, metaphors, and an abuse or perversion of terms from their natural meaning. To check the sallies of the imagination, and to reduce every expression to geometrical truth and exactness, would be the most contrary to the laws of criticism, because it would produce a work which, by universal experience, has been found the most insipid and disagreeable. But though poetry can never submit to exact truth, it must be confined by rules of art, discovered to the author either by genius or observation. If some negligent or irregular writers have pleased, they have not pleased by their transgressions of rule or order,



but in spite of these transgressions. They have possessed other beauties, which were conformable to just criticism, and the force of these beauties has been able to overpower censure, and give the mind a satisfaction superior to the disgust arising from the blemishes. Ariosto pleases, but not by his monstrous and improbable fictions, by his bizarre mixture of the serious and comic styles, by the want of coherence in his stories, or by the continual interruptions of his narration. He charms by the force and clearness of his expression, by the readiness and variety of his inventions, and by his natural pictures of the passions, especially those of the gay and amorous kind; and however his faults may diminish our satisfaction, they are not able entirely to destroy it. Did our pleasure really arise from those parts of his poem which we denominate faults, this would be no objection to criticism in general; it would only be an objection to those particular rules of criticism which would establish such circumstances to be faults, and would represent them as universally blamable. If they are found to please, they cannot be faults, let the pleasure which they produce be ever so unexpected and unaccountable. . . .

The same Homer who pleased at Athens and Rome two thousand years ago, is still admired at Paris and at London. All the changes of climate, government, religion, and language have not been able to obscure his glory. Authority or prejudice may give a temporary vogue to a bad poet or orator, but his reputation will never be durable or general. When his compositions are examined by posterity or by foreigners, the enchantment is dissipated, and his faults appear in their true colors. On the contrary, a real genius, the longer his works endure, and the more wide they are spread, the more sincere is the admiration which he meets with. Envy and jealousy have too much place in a narrow circle, and even familiar acquaintance with his person may diminish the applause due to his performances; but when these obstructions are removed, the beauties, which are naturally fitted to excite agreeable sentiments, immediately display their energy, and while the world endures they maintain their authority over the minds of men.

It appears, then, that, amidst all the variety and caprice of taste, there are certain general principles of approbation or blame, whose influence a careful eye may trace in all operations

of the mind. Some particular forms or qualities, from the original structure of the internal fabric, are calculated to please, and others to displease; and if they fail of their effect in any particular instance, it is from some apparent defect or imperfection in the organ. A man in a fever would not insist on his palate as able to decide concerning flavors, nor would one affected with the jaundice pretend to give a verdict with regard to colors. In each creature there is a sound and a defective state, and the former alone can be supposed to afford us a true standard of taste and sentiment. If, in the sound state of the organ, there be an entire or a considerable uniformity of sentiment among men, we may thence derive an idea of the perfect beauty; in like manner as the appearance of objects in daylight, to the eye of a man in health, is denominated their true and real color, even while color is allowed to be merely a phantasm of the senses.

Many and frequent are the defects in the internal organs, which prevent or weaken the influence of those general principles on which depends our sentiment of beauty or deformity. Though some objects, by the structure of the mind, be naturally calculated to give us pleasure, it is not to be expected that in every individual the pleasure will be equally felt. Particular incidents and situations occur, which either throw a false light on the objects or hinder the true from conveying to the imagination the proper sentiment and perception.

One obvious cause why many feel not the proper sentiment of beauty, is the want of that delicacy of imagination which is requisite to convey a sensibility of those finer emotions. This delicacy every one pretends to; every one talks of it; and would reduce every kind of taste or sentiment to its standard. But as our intention in this essay is to mingle some light of the understanding with the feelings of sentiment, it will be proper to give a more accurate definition of delicacy than has hitherto been attempted. And not to draw our philosophy from too profound a source, we shall have recourse to a noted story in *Don Quixote*.

"It is with good reason," says Sancho to the squire with the great nose, "that I pretend to have a judgment in wine: this is a quality hereditary in our family. Two of my kinsmen were once called to give their opinion of a hogshead which was supposed to be excellent, being old and of a good vintage. One of

them tastes it, — considers it, and, after mature reflection, pronounces the wine to be good, were it not for a small taste of leather which he perceived in it. The other, after using the same precautions, gives also his verdict in favor of the wine, but with the reserve of a taste of iron which he could easily distinguish. You cannot imagine how much they were both ridiculed for their judgment. But who laughed in the end? On emptying the hogshead, there was found at the bottom an old key with a leathern thong tied to it.”

The great resemblance between mental and bodily taste will easily teach us to apply this story. Though it be certain that beauty and deformity, more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external, it must be allowed that there are certain qualities in objects which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings. Now as these qualities may be found in a small degree, or may be mixed and confounded with each other, it often happens that the taste is not affected with such minute qualities, or is not able to distinguish all the particular flavors, amidst the disorder in which they are presented. Where the organs are so fine as to allow nothing to escape them, and at the same time so exact as to perceive every ingredient in the composition, this we call delicacy of taste, whether we employ these terms in the literal or metaphorical sense. Here then the general rules of beauty are of use, being drawn from established models, and from the observation of what pleases or displeases, when presented singly and in a high degree. And if the same qualities, in a continued composition and in a smaller degree, affect not the organs with a sensible delight or uneasiness, we exclude the person from all pretensions to this delicacy. To produce these general rules or avowed patterns of composition is like finding the key with the leathern thong, which justified the verdict of Sancho's kinsmen, and confounded those pretended judges who had condemned them. Though the hogshead had never been emptied, the taste of the one was still equally delicate, and that of the other equally dull and languid; but it would have been more difficult to have proved the superiority of the former, to the conviction of every bystander. In like manner, though the beauties of writing had never been methodized or reduced to general principles, though no excel-



lent models had ever been acknowledged, the different degrees of taste would still have subsisted, and the judgment of one man been preferable to that of another; but it would not have been so easy to silence the bad critic, who might always insist upon his particular sentiment, and refuse to submit to his antagonist. But when we show him an avowed principle of art; when we illustrate this principle by examples whose operation, from his own particular taste, he acknowledges to be conformable to the principle; when we prove that the same principle may be applied to the present case, where he did not perceive or feel its influence, — he must conclude, upon the whole, that the fault lies in himself, and that he wants the delicacy which is requisite to make him sensible of every beauty and every blemish in any composition or discourse.

It is acknowledged to be the perfection of every sense or faculty, to perceive with exactness its most minute objects, and allow nothing to escape its notice and observation. The smaller the objects are which become sensible to the eye, the finer is that organ and the more elaborate its make and composition. A good palate is not tried by strong flavors, but by a mixture of small ingredients, where we are still sensible of each part, notwithstanding its minuteness and its confusion with the rest. In like manner, a quick and acute perception of beauty and deformity must be the perfection of our mental taste; nor can a man be satisfied with himself while he suspects that any excellence or blemish in a discourse has passed him unobserved. In this case the perfection of the man, and the perfection of the sense or feeling, are found to be united. A very delicate palate, on many occasions, may be a great inconvenience both to a man himself and to his friends. But a delicate taste of wit or beauty must always be a desirable quality, because it is the source of all the finest and most innocent enjoyments of which human nature is susceptible. In this decision the sentiments of all mankind are agreed. Wherever you can ascertain a delicacy of taste, it is sure to meet with approbation; and the best way of ascertaining it is to appeal to those models and principles which have been established by the uniform consent and experience of nations and ages. . . .

Though the principles of taste be universal, and nearly, if not entirely, the same in all men, yet few are qualified to give judg-

ment on any work of art, or establish their own sentiment as the standard of beauty. The organs of internal sensation are seldom so perfect as to allow the general principles their full play, and produce a feeling correspondent to those principles. They either labor under some defect, or are vitiated by some disorder; and by that means excite a sentiment which may be pronounced erroneous. When the critic has no delicacy, he judges without any distinction, and is only affected by the grosser and more palpable qualities of the object; the finer touches pass unnoticed and disregarded. Where he is not aided by practice, his verdict is attended with confusion and hesitation. Where no comparison has been employed, the most frivolous beauties, such as rather merit the name of defects, are the object of his admiration. Where he lies under the influence of prejudice, all his natural sentiments are perverted. Where good sense is wanting, he is not qualified to discern the beauties of design and reasoning, which are the highest and most excellent. Under some or other of these imperfections the generality of men labor, and hence a true judge in the finer arts is observed, even during the most polished ages, to be so rare a character. Strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character; and the joint verdict of such, wherever they are to be found, is the true standard of taste and beauty. . . .

## MY OWN LIFE

1777

[The autobiographical sketch here represented was dated April 18, 1776, some four months before Hume's death, and was published the following year as a pamphlet called *The Life of David Hume, Esq.; written by himself*. In a codicil to his will Hume desired that it might be prefixed to his collected works.]

. . . I HAD always entertained a notion that my want of success in publishing the *Treatise of Human Nature* had proceeded more from the manner than the matter, and that I had been guilty of a very usual indiscretion in going to the press too early. I therefore cast the first part of that work anew in

the *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding*, which was published while I was at Turin. But this piece was at first little more successful than the *Treatise of Human Nature*. On my return from Italy I had the mortification to find all England in a ferment on account of Dr. Middleton's *Free Inquiry*, while my performance was entirely overlooked and neglected. A new edition, which had been published at London, of my *Essays, Moral and Political*, met not with a much better reception.

Such is the force of natural temper that these disappointments made little or no impression on me. I went down in 1749, and lived two years with my brother at his country house, for my mother was now dead. I there composed the second part of my *Essays*, which I called *Political Discourses*, and also my *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, which is another part of my treatise that I cast anew. Meanwhile my bookseller, A. Millar, informed me that my former publications (all but the unfortunate *Treatise*) were beginning to be the subject of conversation, that the sale of them was gradually increasing, and that new editions were demanded. Answers by Reverends and Right Reverends came out two or three in a year, and I found, by Dr. Warburton's railing, that the books were beginning to be esteemed in good company. However, I had fixed a resolution, which I inflexibly maintained, never to reply to anybody; and not being very irascible in my temper, I have easily kept myself clear of all literary squabbles. These symptoms of a rising reputation gave me encouragement, as I was ever more disposed to see the favorable than unfavorable side of things, — a turn of mind which it is more happy to possess, than to be born to an estate of ten thousand a year. . . .

In 1752 the Faculty of Advocates chose me their Librarian, an office from which I received little or no emolument, but which gave me the command of a large library. I then formed the plan of writing the History of England; but being frightened with the notion of continuing a narrative through a period of 1700 years, I commenced with the accession of the House of Stuart, an epoch when, I thought, the misrepresentations of faction began chiefly to take place. I was, I own, sanguine in my expectations of the success of this work. I thought that I was the only historian that had at once neglected present power, interest, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices; and



as the subject was suited to every capacity, I expected proportional applause. But miserable was my disappointment: I was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation; English, Scotch, and Irish, Whig and Tory, churchman and sectary, free-thinker and religionist, patriot and courtier, united in their rage against the man who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I and the Earl of Strafford; and after the first ebullitions of their fury were over, what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion. Mr. Millar told me that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it. . . .

In 1756, two years after the fall of the first volume, was published the second volume of my History, containing the period from the death of Charles I till the Revolution. This performance happened to give less displeasure to the Whigs, and was better received. It not only rose itself, but helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother. But though I had been taught by experience that the Whig party were in possession of bestowing all places, both in the state and in literature, I was so little inclined to yield to their senseless clamor, that in about a hundred alterations, which farther study, reading, or reflection engaged me to make, in the reigns of the first two Stuarts, I have made all of them invariably to the Tory side. . . .

I returned to Edinburgh in 1769, very opulent (for I possessed a revenue of £1000 a year), healthy, and, though somewhat stricken in years, with the prospect of enjoying long my ease, and of seeing the increase of my reputation. In spring 1775 I was struck with a disorder in my bowels, which at first gave me no alarm, but has since, as I apprehend it, become mortal and incurable. I now reckon upon a speedy dissolution. I have suffered very little pain from my disorder; and what is more strange, have, notwithstanding the great decline of my person, never suffered a moment's abatement of my spirits; inso-much that, were I to name the period of my life which I should most choose to pass over again, I might be tempted to point to this latter period. I possess the same ardor as ever in study, and the same gayety in company. I consider, besides, that a man of sixty-five, by dying, cuts off only a few years of infirmities; and though I see many symptoms of my literary reputation's breaking out at last with additional lustre, I know that I

could have but few years to enjoy it. It is difficult to be more detached from life than I am at present.

To conclude historically with my own character. I am, or rather was (for that is the style I must now use in speaking of myself, which emboldens me the more to speak my sentiments), — I was, I say, a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humor, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them. In a word, though most men anywise eminent have found reason to complain of calumny, I never was touched, or even attacked, by her baleful tooth; and though I wantonly exposed myself to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they seemed to be disarmed in my behalf of their wonted fury. My friends never had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of my character and conduct; not but that the zealots, we may well suppose, would have been glad to invent and propagate any story to my disadvantage, but they could never find any which they thought would wear the face of probability. I cannot say there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myself, but I hope it is not a misplaced one; and this is a matter of fact which is easily cleared and ascertained.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS  
[ESSAY ON THE IDEA OF BEAUTY]

1759

[This essay is one of three contributed to *The Idler* by Reynolds, from his friendship for Dr. Johnson; the other two being Numbers 76 and 79. His discussion of the present subject is significant as representing that idea of the *general* as the fundamental element in art, which dominated a great part of eighteenth-century æsthetics, and affected both the painting and the poetry of the period.]

NO. 82. NOVEMBER 10, 1759

DISCOURSING in my last letter on the different practice of the Italian and Dutch painters, I observed that "the Italian painter attends only to the invariable, the great and general ideas which are fixed and inherent in universal nature." I was led into the subject of this letter by endeavoring to fix the original cause of this conduct of the Italian masters. If it can be proved that by this choice they selected the most beautiful part of the creation, it will show how much their principles are founded on reason, and, at the same time, discover the origin of our ideas of beauty.

I suppose it will be easily granted that no man can judge whether any animal be beautiful in its kind, or deformed, who has seen only one of that species. That is as conclusive in regard to the human figure; so that if a man born blind was to recover his sight, and the most beautiful woman was brought before him, he could not determine whether she was handsome or not; nor, if the most beautiful and most deformed were produced, could he any better determine to which he should give the preference, having seen only those two. To distinguish beauty, then, implies the having seen many individuals of that species. If it is asked, how is more skill acquired by the observation of greater numbers? I answer that, in consequence of having seen many, the power is acquired, even without seeking after it, of distinguishing between accidental blemishes and excrescences, which are continually varying the surface of



Nature's works, and the invariable general form which Nature most frequently produces and always seems to intend in her productions.

Thus amongst the blades of grass or leaves of the same tree, though no two can be found exactly alike, yet the general form is invariable. A naturalist, before he chose one as a sample, would examine many; since, if he took the first that occurred, it might have, by accident or otherwise, such a form as that it would scarcely be known to belong to that species. He selects, as the painter does, the most beautiful — that is, the most general — form of nature.

Every species of the animal, as well as the vegetable, creation, may be said to have a fixed or determinate form, towards which Nature is continually inclining, like various lines terminating in the centre; or it may be compared to pendulums, vibrating in different directions over one central point; and as they all cross the centre, though only one passes through any other point, so it will be found that perfect beauty is oftener produced by Nature than deformity, — I do not mean than deformity in general, but than any one kind of deformity. To instance in a particular part of a feature: the line that forms the ridge of the nose is beautiful when it is straight; this, then, is the central form, which is oftener found than either concave, convex, or any other irregular form that shall be proposed. As we are then more accustomed to beauty than deformity, we may conclude that to be the reason why we approve and admire it, as we approve and admire customs and fashions of dress for no other reason than that we are used to them; so that, though habit and custom cannot be said to be the cause of beauty, it is certainly the cause of our liking it. And I have no doubt but that, if we were more used to deformity than beauty, deformity would then lose the idea now annexed to it, and take that of beauty; as, if the whole world should agree that *yes* and *no* should change their meanings, *yes* would then deny, and *no* would affirm.

Whoever undertakes to proceed farther in this argument, and endeavors to fix a general criterion of beauty respecting different species, or to show why one species is more beautiful than another, it will be required from him first to prove that one species is really more beautiful than another. That we pre-

fer one to the other, and with very good reason, will be readily granted; but it does not follow from thence that we think it a more beautiful form, for we have no criterion of form by which to determine our judgment. He who says a swan is more beautiful than a dove, means little more than that he has more pleasure in seeing a swan than a dove, either from the stateliness of its motions or its being a more rare bird. And he who gives the preference to the dove, does it from some association of ideas of innocence that he always annexes to the dove; but if he pretends to defend the preference he gives to one or the other, by endeavoring to prove that this more beautiful form proceeds from a particular gradation of magnitude, undulation of a curve, or direction of a line, or whatever other conceit of his imagination he shall fix on as a criterion of form, he will be continually contradicting himself, and find at last that the great mother of nature will not be subjected to such narrow rules. Among the various reasons why we prefer one part of her works to another, the most general, I believe, is habit and custom. Custom makes, in a certain sense, white black, and black white; it is custom alone determines our preference of the color of the Europeans to the Ethiopians, and they, for the same reason, prefer their own color to ours. I suppose nobody will doubt, if one of their painters were to paint the goddess of beauty, but that he would represent her black, with thick lips, flat nose, and woolly hair. And it seems to me he would act very unnaturally if he did not; for by what criterion will any one dispute the propriety of his idea? We indeed say that the form and color of the European is preferable to that of the Ethiopian; but I know of no other reason we have for it, but that we are more accustomed to it. It is absurd to say that beauty is possessed of attractive powers, which irresistibly seize the corresponding mind with love and admiration, since that argument is equally conclusive in the favor of the white and the black philosopher. The black and white nations must, in respect of beauty, be considered as of different kinds, at least a different species of the same kind; from one of which to the other, as I observed, no inference can be drawn.

Novelty is said to be one of the causes of beauty. That novelty is a very sufficient reason why we should admire, is not denied; but because it is uncommon, is it therefore beautiful?

The beauty that is produced by color, as when we prefer one bird to another, though of the same form, on account of its color, has nothing to do with this argument, which reaches only to form. I have here considered the word beauty as being properly applied to form alone. There is a necessity of fixing this confined sense; for there can be no argument, if the sense of the word is extended to everything that is approved. A rose may as well be said to be beautiful because it has a fine smell, as a bird because of its color. When we apply the word beauty, we do not mean always by it a more beautiful form, but something valuable on account of its rarity, usefulness, color, or any other property. A horse is said to be a beautiful animal; but, had a horse as few good qualities as a tortoise, I do not imagine that he would be then esteemed beautiful.

A fitness to the end proposed is said to be another cause of beauty. But supposing we were proper judges of what form is the most proper in an animal to constitute strength or swiftness, we always determine concerning its beauty before we exert our understanding to judge of its fitness.

From what has been said it may be inferred that the works of nature, if we compare one species with another, are all equally beautiful; and that preference is given from custom, or some association of ideas; and that, in creatures of the same species, beauty is the medium or centre of all its various forms. To conclude, then, by way of corollary: if it has been proved that the painter, by attending to the invariable and general ideas of nature, produces beauty, he must, by regarding minute particularities and accidental discriminations, deviate from the universal rule, and pollute his canvas with deformity.



## LETTERS OF JUNIUS

[These Letters, representing the most brilliant political invective of English historical literature, appeared in the *Public Advertiser* between November 1768 and January 1772 (the first of the letters which reappeared in the collected edition was that of January 21, 1769). They were partially collected for publication in book form in 1769; the corrected author's edition appeared in 1772. The authorship has remained a secret to this day, having been attributed, at various times, to some forty different persons. The most prevalent theory, however, has been that Junius was Sir Philip Francis (1740-1818). (See, for discussions of the subject, the article on Junius in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and Leslie Stephen's article on Francis in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.) Whoever Junius was, he represented that branch of the Whigs which was especially attached to George Grenville and his brother Lord Temple. The letters created no small excitement in political circles, at the time of publication; the chief sensation was due to the letter to the King, of December 19, 1769, a part of which is reprinted below.]

TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF BEDFORD

September 19, 1769.

MY LORD:

You are so little accustomed to receive any marks of respect or esteem from the public, that if, in the following lines, a compliment or expression of applause should escape me, I fear you would consider it as a mockery of your established character, and perhaps an insult to your understanding. You have nice feelings, my Lord, if we may judge from your resentments. Cautious, therefore, of giving offense where you have so little deserved it, I shall leave the illustration of your virtues to other hands. Your friends have a privilege to play upon the easiness of your temper, or possibly they are better acquainted with your good qualities than I am. You have done good by stealth. The rest is upon record. You have still left ample room for speculation, when panegyric is exhausted.

You are indeed a very considerable man. The highest rank, a splendid fortune, and a name glorious, till it was yours, were sufficient to have supported you with meaner abilities than I think you possess. From the first, you derived a constitutional claim to respect; from the second, a natural extensive author-

ity; the last created a partial expectation of hereditary virtues. The use you have made of these uncommon advantages might have been more honorable to yourself, but could not be more instructive to mankind. We may trace it in the veneration of your country, the choice of your friends, and in the accomplishment of every sanguine hope which the public might have conceived from the illustrious name of Russell.

The eminence of your station gave you a commanding prospect of your duty. The road which led to honor was open to your view. You could not lose it by mistake, and you had no temptation to depart from it by design. Compare the natural dignity and importance of the richest peer of England, the noble independence which he might have maintained in Parliament, and the real interest and respect which he might have acquired, not only in Parliament, but through the whole kingdom,—compare these glorious distinctions with the ambition of holding a share in government, the emoluments of a place, the sale of a borough, or the purchase of a corporation; and, though you may not regret the virtues which create respect, you may see with anguish how much real importance and authority you have lost. Consider the character of an independent, virtuous Duke of Bedford; imagine what he might be in this country; then reflect one moment upon what you are.

If it be possible for me to withdraw my attention from the fact, I will tell you in theory what such a man might be. Conscious of his own weight and importance, his conduct in Parliament would be directed by nothing but the constitutional duty of a peer. He would consider himself as a guardian of the laws. Willing to support the just measures of government, but determined to observe the conduct of the minister with suspicion, he would oppose the violence of faction with as much firmness as the encroachments of prerogative. He would be as little capable of bargaining with the minister for places for himself or his dependents, as of descending to mix himself in the intrigues of opposition. Whenever an important question called for his opinion in Parliament, he would be heard by the most profligate minister with deference and respect. His authority would either sanctify or disgrace the measures of government. The people would look up to him as their protector, and a

virtuous prince would have one honest man in his dominions, in whose integrity and judgment he might safely confide. . . .

Your Grace may probably discover something more intelligible in the negative part of this illustrious character. The man I have described would never prostitute his dignity in Parliament by an indecent violence, either in opposing or defending a minister. He would not at one moment rancorously persecute, at another basely cringe to, the favorite of his sovereign. After outraging the royal dignity with peremptory conditions, little short of menace and hostility, he would never descend to the humility of soliciting an interview with the favorite, and of offering to recover, at any price, the honor of his friendship. Though deceived, perhaps, in his youth, he would not, through the course of a long life, have invariably chosen his friends from among the most profligate of mankind. His own honor would have forbidden him from mixing his private pleasures or conversation with jockeys, gamesters, blasphemers, gladiators, or buffoons. He would then have never felt, much less would he have submitted to, the dishonest necessity of engaging in the interest and intrigues of his dependents, — of supplying their vices, or relieving their beggary, at the expense of his country. . . .

A great man, in the success and even in the magnitude of his crimes, finds a rescue from contempt. Your Grace is every way unfortunate. . . . It may, perhaps, be a pleasure to reflect that there is hardly a corner of any of His Majesty's dominions, except France, in which, at one time or other, your valuable life has not been in danger. Amiable man! we see and acknowledge the protection of Providence, by which you have so often escaped the personal detestation of your fellow-subjects, and are still reserved for the public justice of your country. . . .

TO THE PRINTER OF THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER

December 19, 1769.

SIR:

When the complaints of a brave and powerful people are observed to increase in proportion to the wrongs they have suffered; when, instead of sinking into submission, they are roused to resistance, the time will soon arrive at which every inferior



consideration must yield to the security of the sovereign and to the general safety of the state. There is a moment of difficulty and danger, at which flattery and falsehood can no longer deceive, and simplicity itself can no longer be misled. Let us suppose it arrived: let us suppose a gracious, well-intentioned prince made sensible, at last, of the great duty he owes to his people, and of his own disgraceful situation; that he looks round him for assistance, and asks for no advice but how to gratify the wishes and secure the happiness of his subjects. In these circumstances, it may be matter of curious speculation to consider, if an honest man were permitted to approach a king, in what terms he would address himself to his sovereign. Let it be imagined, no matter how improbable, that the first prejudice against his character is removed, that the ceremonious difficulties of an audience are surmounted; that he feels himself animated by the purest and most honorable affections to his king and country; and that the great person whom he addresses has spirit enough to bid him speak freely, and understanding enough to listen to him with attention. Unacquainted with the vain impertinence of forms, he would deliver his sentiments with dignity and firmness, but not without respect.

SIR: It is the misfortune of your life, and originally the cause of every reproach and distress which has attended your government, that you should never have been acquainted with the language of truth, until you heard it in the complaints of your people. It is not, however, too late to correct the error of your education. We are still inclined to make an indulgent allowance for the pernicious lessons you received in your youth, and to form the most sanguine hopes from the natural benevolence of your disposition. We are far from thinking you capable of a direct, deliberate purpose to invade those original rights of your subjects, on which all their civil and political liberties depend. Had it been possible for us to entertain a suspicion so dishonorable to your character, we should long since have adopted a style of remonstrance very distant from the humility of complaint. The doctrine inculcated by our laws, that "the king can do no wrong," is admitted without reluctance. We separate the amiable, good-natured prince from the folly and treachery of his servants, and the private virtues of the man from the vices of his government. Were it not for this

just distinction, I know not whether your Majesty's condition, or that of the English nation, would deserve most to be lamented. . . .

If an English king be hated or despised, he *must* be unhappy; and this, perhaps, is the only political truth which he ought to be convinced of without experiment. But if the English people should no longer confine their resentment to a submissive representation of their wrongs; if, following the glorious example of their ancestors, they should no longer appeal to the creature of the constitution, but to that high Being who gave them the rights of humanity, whose gifts it were sacrilege to surrender, — let me ask you, Sir, upon what part of your subjects would you rely for assistance?

The people of Ireland have been uniformly plundered and oppressed. In return, they give you every day fresh marks of their resentment. They despise the miserable governor you have sent them, because he is the creature of Lord Bute; nor is it from any natural confusion in their ideas that they are so ready to confound the original of a king with the disgraceful representation of him.

The distance of the colonies would make it impossible for them to take an active concern in your affairs, if they were as well affected to your government as they once pretended to be to your person. They were ready enough to distinguish between you and your ministers. They complained of an act of the legislature, but traced the origin of it no higher than to the servants of the crown; they pleased themselves with the hope that their sovereign, if not favorable to their cause, at least was impartial. The decisive personal part you took against them has effectually banished that first distinction from their minds. They consider you as united with your servants against America, and know not how to distinguish the sovereign and a venal parliament on one side, from the real sentiments of the English people on the other. Looking forward to independence, they might possibly receive you for their king; but if ever you retire to America, be assured they will give you such a Covenant to digest as the Presbytery of Scotland would have been ashamed to offer to Charles the Second. They left their native land in search of freedom, and found it in a desert. Divided as they are into a thousand forms of policy and religion, there is one

point in which they all agree: they equally detest the pageantry of a king and the supercilious hypocrisy of a bishop.

It is not, then, from the alienated affections of Ireland or America that you can reasonably look for assistance; still less from the people of England, who are actually contending for their rights, and in this great question are parties against you. You are not, however, destitute of every appearance of support; you have all the Jacobites, Nonjurors, Roman Catholics, and Tories of this country, and all Scotland, without exception. Considering from what family you are descended, the choice of your friends has been singularly directed; and truly, Sir, if you had not lost the Whig interest of England, I should admire your dexterity in turning the hearts of your enemies. . . .

As to the Scotch, I must suppose your heart and understanding so biased, from your earliest infancy, in their favor, that nothing less than your own misfortunes can undeceive you. You will not accept of the uniform experience of your ancestors; and, when once a man is determined to believe, the very absurdity of the doctrine confirms him in his faith. A bigoted understanding can draw a proof of attachment to the house of Hanover from a notorious zeal for the house of Stuart, and find an earnest of future loyalty in former rebellions. Appearances are, however, in their favor, — so strongly, indeed, that one would think they had forgotten that you are their lawful king, and had mistaken you for a pretender to the crown. Let it be admitted, then, that the Scotch are as sincere in their present professions as if you were, in reality, not an Englishman, but a Briton of the North. You would not be the first prince of their native country against whom they have rebelled, nor the first whom they have basely betrayed. . . .

From the uses to which one part of the army has been too frequently applied, you have some reason to expect that there are no services they would refuse. Here, too, we trace the partiality of your understanding. You take the sense of the army from the conduct of the Guards, with the same justice with which you collect the sense of the people from the representations of the ministry. Your marching regiments, sir, will not make the Guards their example, either as soldiers or subjects. They feel, and resent — as they ought to do — that invariable, undistinguishing favor with which the Guards are treated; while



those gallant troops by whom every hazardous, every laborious service is performed, are left to perish in garrisons abroad, or pine in quarters at home, neglected and forgotten. If they had no sense of the great original duty they owe their country, their resentment would operate like patriotism, and leave your cause to be defended by those to whom you have lavished the rewards and honors of their profession. The Pretorian bands, enervated and debauched as they were, had still strength enough to awe the Roman populace, but when the distant legions took the alarm, they marched to Rome, and gave away the empire.

On this side, then, whichever way you turn your eyes, you see nothing but perplexity and distress. You may determine to support the very ministry who have reduced your affairs to this deplorable situation; you may shelter yourself under the forms of a parliament, and set your people at defiance; but be assured, Sir, that such a resolution would be as imprudent as it would be odious. If it did not immediately shake your establishment, it would rob you of your peace of mind forever. . . .

These sentiments, Sir, and the style they are conveyed in, may be offensive, perhaps, because they are new to you. Accustomed to the language of courtiers, you measure their affections by the vehemence of their expressions; and when they only praise you indifferently, you admire their sincerity. But this is not a time to trifle with your fortune. They deceive you, Sir, who tell you that you have many friends whose affections are founded upon a principle of personal attachment. The first foundation of friendship is not the power of conferring benefits, but the equality with which they are received and may be returned. The fortune which made you a king forbade you to have a friend. It is a law of nature, which cannot be violated with impunity. The mistaken prince who looks for friendship will find a favorite, and in that favorite the ruin of his affairs.

The people of England are loyal to the house of Hanover; not from a vain preference of one family to another, but from a conviction that the establishment of that family was necessary to the support of their civil and religious liberties. This, Sir, is a principle of allegiance equally solid and rational, fit for Englishmen to adopt, and well worthy of your Majesty's encouragement. We cannot long be deluded by nominal distinctions. The name of Stuart, of itself, is only contemptible; armed with the

sovereign authority, their principles are formidable. The prince who imitates their conduct should be warned by their example; and, while he plumes himself upon the security of his title to the crown, should remember that, as it was acquired by one revolution, it may be lost by another.

TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF GRAFTON

September 28, 1771.

MY LORD:

The people of England are not apprised of the full extent of their obligations to you. They have yet no adequate idea of the endless variety of your character. They have seen you distinguished and successful in the continued violation of those moral and political duties by which the little as well as the great societies of life are connected and held together. Every color, every character became you. With a rate of abilities which Lord Weymouth very justly looks down upon with contempt, you have done as much mischief to the community as Cromwell would have done, if Cromwell had been a coward, and as much as Machiavel, if Machiavel had not known that an appearance of morals and religion are useful in society. To a thinking man the influence of the crown will in no view appear so formidable as when he observes to what enormous excesses it has safely conducted your Grace, without a ray of real understanding, without even the pretension to common decency or principle of any kind, or a single spark of personal resolution. What must be the operation of that pernicious influence (for which our kings have wisely exchanged the nugatory name of prerogative), that in the highest stations can so abundantly supply the absence of virtue, courage, and abilities, and qualify a man to be the minister of a great nation, whom a private gentleman would be ashamed and afraid to admit into his family! Like the universal passport of an ambassador, it supersedes the prohibition of the laws, banishes the staple virtues of the country, and introduces vice and folly triumphantly into all the departments of the state. Other princes, besides His Majesty, have had the means of corruption within their reach, but they have used it with moderation. In former times, corruption was considered as a foreign auxiliary to government, and only called in upon extraordinary emergencies. The unfeigned piety,

the sanctified religion, of George the Third, have taught him to new model the civil forces of the state. The natural resources of the crown are no longer confided in. Corruption glitters in the van, collects and maintains a standing army of mercenaries, and at the same moment impoverishes and enslaves the country. His Majesty's predecessors (excepting that worthy family from which you, my Lord, are unquestionably descended) had some generous qualities in their composition, with vices, I confess, or frailties in abundance. They were kings or gentlemen, not hypocrites or priests. They were at the head of the Church, but did not know the value of their office. They said their prayers without ceremony, and had too little priestcraft in their understanding to reconcile the sanctimonious forms of religion with the utter destruction of the morality of their people.

My Lord, this is fact, not declamation. With all your partiality to the house of Stuart, you must confess that even Charles the Second would have blushed at that open encouragement, at those eager, meretricious caresses, with which every species of private vice and public prostitution is received at St. James's. The unfortunate house of Stuart has been treated with an asperity which, if comparison be a defense, seems to border upon injustice. Neither Charles nor his brother were qualified to support such a system of measures as would be necessary to change the government and subvert the constitution of England. One of them was too much in earnest in his pleasures, the other in his religion. But the danger to this country would cease to be problematical, if the crown should ever descend to a prince whose apparent simplicity might throw his subjects off their guard, — who might be no libertine in behavior, who should have no sense of honor to restrain him, and who, with just religion enough to impose upon the multitude, might have no scruples of conscience to interfere with his morality. With these honorable qualifications, and the decisive advantage of situation, low craft and falsehood are all the abilities that are wanting to destroy the wisdom of ages, and to deface the noblest monument that human policy has erected. I know such a man; my Lord, I know you both; and, with the blessing of God (for I, too, am religious), the people of England shall know you as well as I do. . . . From whatever origin



your influence in this country arises, it is a phenomenon in the history of human virtue and understanding. Good men can hardly believe the fact; wise men are unable to account for it; religious men find exercise for their faith, and make it the last effort of their piety not to repine against Providence.

# OLIVER GOLDSMITH

## THE BEE

1759

[This periodical appeared on October 6, 1759, at the beginning of Goldsmith's career as a hack writer; it lasted through only eight weekly numbers. Each number contained from three to five essays, all apparently written by Goldsmith himself. The "Reverie" here represented is from No. 5.]

### A REVERIE

. . . I FANCIED myself placed in the yard of a large inn, in which there were an infinite number of wagons and stage-coaches, attended by fellows who either invited the company to take their places, or were busied in packing their baggage. Each vehicle had its inscription, showing the place of its destination. On one I could read, *THE PLEASURE STAGE-COACH*; on another, *THE WAGON OF INDUSTRY*; on a third, *THE VANITY WHIM*; and on a fourth, *THE LANDAU OF RICHES*. I had some inclination to step into each of these, one after another; but, I know not by what means, I passed them by, and at last fixed my eye upon a small carriage, berlin fashion, which seemed the most convenient vehicle at a distance in the world, and upon my nearer approach found it to be *THE FAME MACHINE*.

I instantly made up to the coachman, whom I found to be an affable and seemingly good-natured fellow. He informed me that he had but a few days ago returned from the Temple of Fame, to which he had been carrying Addison, Swift, Pope, Steele, Congreve, and Colley Cibber; that they made but indifferent company by the way; and that he once or twice was going to empty his berlin of the whole cargo. "However," says he, "I got them all safe home, with no other damage than a black eye which Colley gave Mr. Pope, and am now returned for another coachful."

"If that be all, friend," said I, "and if you are in want of company, I'll make one with all my heart. Open the door; I hope the machine rides easy."

"Oh, for that, sir, extremely easy." But, still keeping the door shut, and measuring me with his eye — "Pray, sir, have you no luggage? You seem to be a good-natured sort of a gentleman, but I don't find you have got any luggage, and I never permit any to travel with me but such as have something valuable to pay for coach-hire."

Examining my pockets, I own I was not a little disconcerted at this unexpected rebuff; but, considering that I carried a number of the *Bee* under my arm, I was resolved to open it in his eyes, and dazzle him with the splendor of the page. He read the title and contents, however, without any emotion, and assured me he had never heard of it before.

"In short, friend," said he, now losing all his former respect, "you must not come in. I expect better passengers. But as you seem a harmless creature, perhaps, if there be room left, I may let you ride a while for charity."

I now took my stand by the coachman at the door, and, since I could not command a seat, was resolved to be as useful as possible, and earn by my assiduity what I could not by my merit.

The next that presented for a place was a most whimsical figure indeed.<sup>1</sup> He was hung round with papers of his own composing, not unlike those who sing ballads in the streets, and came dancing up to the door with all the confidence of instant admittance. The volubility of his motion and address prevented my being able to read more of his cargo than the word *Inspector*, which was written in great letters at the top of some of the papers. He opened the coach-door himself without any ceremony, and was just slipping in when the coachman, with as little ceremony, pulled him back. Our figure seemed perfectly angry at this repulse, and demanded gentleman's satisfaction.

"Lord, sir!" replied the coachman, "instead of proper luggage, by your bulk you seem loaded for a West India voyage. You are big enough, with all your papers, to crack twenty stage-coaches. Excuse me, indeed, sir, for you must not enter."

Our figure now began to expostulate. He assured the coachman that, though his baggage seemed so bulky, it was perfectly light, and that he would be contented with the smallest corner

<sup>1</sup> John Hill, author of many miscellaneous writings and of the *Inspector* papers (1751-3).



of room. But Jehu was inflexible, and the carrier of the *Inspectors* was sent to dance back again, with all his papers fluttering in the wind. We expected to have no more trouble from this quarter, when, in a few minutes, the same figure changed his appearance, like Harlequin upon the stage, and with the same confidence again made his approaches, dressed in lace, and carrying nothing but a nosegay. Upon coming near, he thrust the nosegay to the coachman's nose, grasped the brass, and seemed now resolved to enter by violence. I found the struggle soon begin to grow hot, and the coachman, who was a little old, unable to continue the contest. So, in order to ingratiate myself, I stepped in to his assistance, and our united efforts sent our literary Proteus, though worsted, unconquered still, dancing a rigadon, and smelling to his own nosegay.

The person<sup>1</sup> who after him appeared as candidate for a place in the stage came up with an air not quite so confident, but somewhat, however, theatrical; and, instead of entering, made the coachman a very low bow, which the other returned, and desired to see his baggage; upon which he instantly produced some farces, a tragedy, and other miscellany productions. The coachman, casting his eye upon the cargo, assured him at present he could not possibly have a place, but hoped in time he might aspire to one, as he seemed to have read in the book of Nature, without a careful perusal of which none ever found entrance at the Temple of Fame.

"What!" replied the disappointed poet, "shall my tragedy, in which I have vindicated the cause of liberty and virtue —"

"Follow nature," returned the other, "and never expect to find lasting fame by topics which only please from their popularity. Had you been first in the cause of freedom, or praised in virtue more than an empty name, it is possible you might have gained admittance; but at present I beg, sir, you will stand aside for another gentleman whom I see approaching."

This was a very grave personage,<sup>2</sup> whom at some distance I took for one of the most reserved, and even disagreeable, figures I had seen; but as he approached his appearance improved, and when I could distinguish him thoroughly, I perceived that, in spite of the severity of his brow, he had one

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Murphy, author of a tragedy called *The Orphan of China*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Doctor Johnson.

of the most good-natured countenances that could be imagined. Upon coming to open the stage-door, he lifted a parcel of folios into the seat before him, but our inquisitorial coachman at once shoved them out again.

"What! not take in my Dictionary?" exclaimed the other, in a rage.

"Be patient, sir," replied the coachman. "I have drove a coach, man and boy, these two thousand years, but I do not remember to have carried above one dictionary during the whole time. That little book which I perceive peeping from one of your pockets, — may I presume to ask what it contains?"

"A mere trifle," replied the author. "It is called the *Rambler*."

"The *Rambler*!" says the coachman. "I beg, sir, you'll take your place. I have heard our ladies in the court of Apollo frequently mention it with rapture; and Clio, who happens to be a little grave, has been heard to prefer it to the *Spectator*, though others have observed that the reflections, by being refined, sometimes become minute."

This grave gentleman was scarcely seated when another,<sup>1</sup> whose appearance was something more modern, seemed willing to enter, yet afraid to ask. He carried in his hand a bundle of essays, of which the coachman was curious enough to inquire the contents.

"These," replied the gentleman, "are rhapsodies against the religion of my country."

"And how can you expect to come into my coach, after thus choosing the wrong side of the question?"

"Ay, but I am right," replied the other; "and if you give me leave, I shall in a few minutes state the argument."

"Right or wrong," said the coachman, "he who disturbs religion is a blockhead, and he shall never travel in a coach of mine."

"If, then," said the gentleman, mustering up all his courage, "if I am not to have admittance as an essayist, I hope I shall not be repulsed as an historian; the last volume of my history met with applause."

"Yes," replied the coachman, "but I have heard only the

<sup>1</sup> Hume.

first approved at the Temple of Fame; and as I see you have it about you, enter, without further ceremony."

My attention was now diverted to a crowd who were pushing forward a person<sup>1</sup> that seemed more inclined to the Stage-coach of Riches; but by their means he was driven forward to the same machine, which he nevertheless seemed heartily to despise. Impelled, however, by their solicitations, he steps up, flourishing a voluminous history, and demanding admittance.

"Sir, I have formerly heard your name mentioned," says the coachman, "but never as an historian. Is there no other work upon which you may claim a place?"

"None," replied the other, "except a romance. But this is a work of too trifling a nature to claim future attention."

"You mistake," says the inquisitor. "A well-written romance is no such easy task as is generally imagined. I remember formerly to have carried Cervantes and Segrais; and, if you think fit, you may enter."

Upon our three literary travelers coming into the same coach, I listened attentively to hear what might be the conversation that passed upon this extraordinary occasion; when, instead of agreeable or entertaining dialogue, I found them grumbling at each other, and each seemed discontented with his companions. Strange! thought I to myself, that they who are born to enlighten the world should still preserve the narrow prejudices of childhood, and, by disagreeing, make even the highest merit ridiculous. Were the learned and the wise to unite against the dunces of society, instead of sometimes siding into opposite parties with them, they might throw a lustre upon each other's reputation, and teach every rank of subordinate merit, if not to admire, at least not to avow dislike.

In the midst of these reflections I perceived the coachman, unmindful of me, had now mounted the box. Several were approaching to be taken in, whose pretensions I was sensible were very just; I therefore desired him to stop and take in more passengers. But he replied, as he had now mounted the box, it would be improper to come down, but that he should take them all, one after the other, when he should return. So he drove away; and for myself, as I could not get in, I mounted behind, in order to hear the conversation on the way.

<sup>1</sup> Smollett.



## THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

1762

[In its original form this work was a series of papers contributed to Newbery's *Public Ledger*, in 1760, under the title of "Chinese Letters." These were reprinted, with additions, as *The Citizen of the World*, in 1762. Most of the letters are supposed to be written by Lien Chi Altangi, a Chinese traveler stopping in London, to Fum Hoam, First President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking. The plan seems to have been suggested by a pamphlet of Horace Walpole's entitled *A Letter from Xo Ho, a Chinese Philosopher at London, to his friend Lien Chi, at Peking* (see Austin Dobson's essay on *The Citizen of the World* in his *Eighteenth Century Vignettes*, First Series).]

## LETTER IV

THE English seem as silent as the Japanese, yet vainer than the inhabitants of Siam. Upon my arrival I attributed that reserve to modesty which I now find has its origin in pride. Condescend to address them first, and you are sure of their acquaintance; stoop to flattery, and you conciliate their friendship and esteem. They bear hunger, cold, fatigue, and all the miseries of life, without shrinking; danger only calls forth their fortitude; they even exult in calamity; but contempt is what they cannot bear. An Englishman fears contempt more than death; he often flies to death as a refuge from its pressure, and dies when he fancies the world has ceased to esteem him.

Pride seems the source not only of their national vices, but of their national virtues also. An Englishman is taught to love his king as his friend, but to acknowledge no other master than the laws which himself has contributed to enact. He despises those nations who, that one may be free, are all content to be slaves; who first lift a tyrant into terror, and then shrink under his power as if delegated from heaven. Liberty is echoed in all their assemblies; and thousands might be found ready to offer up their lives for the sound, though perhaps not one of all the number understands its meaning. The lowest mechanic, however, looks upon it as his duty to be a watchful guardian of his country's freedom, and often uses a language that might seem haughty even in the mouth of the great emperor who traces his ancestry to the Moon.

A few days ago, passing by one of their prisons, I could not

avoid stopping, in order to listen to a dialogue which I thought might afford me some entertainment. The conversation was carried on between a debtor, through the grate of his prison, a porter who had stopped to rest his burden, and a soldier at the window. The subject was upon a threatened invasion from France, and each seemed extremely anxious to rescue his country from the impending danger. "For my part," cries the prisoner, "the greatest of my apprehensions is for our freedom. If the French should conquer, what would become of English liberty? My dear friends, liberty is the Englishman's prerogative; we must preserve that at the expense of our lives; of that the French shall never deprive us. It is not to be expected that men who are slaves themselves would preserve our freedom should they happen to conquer."

"Ay, slaves," cries the porter; "they are all slaves, fit only to carry burdens, every one of them. Before I would stoop to slavery, may this be my poison!" (and he held the goblet in his hand) "May this be my poison! But I would sooner list for a soldier."

The soldier, taking the goblet from his friend, with much awe fervently cried out, "It is not so much our liberties as our religion that would suffer by such a change; ay, our religion, my lads. May the devil sink me in flames," (such was the solemnity of his adjuration) "if the French should come over, but our religion would be utterly undone!" So saying, instead of a libation, he applied the goblet to his lips, and confirmed his sentiments with a ceremony of the most persevering devotion.

In short, every man here pretends to be a politician; even the fair sex are sometimes found to mix the severity of national altercation with the blandishments of love, and often become conquerors by more weapons of destruction than their eyes.

This universal passion for politics is gratified by daily gazettes, as with us in China. But as in ours the emperor endeavors to instruct his people, in theirs the people endeavor to instruct the administration. You must not, however, imagine that they who compile these papers have any actual knowledge of the politics or the government of a state; they only collect their materials from the oracle of some coffee-house, which oracle has himself gathered them the night before from a beau at a gaming-table, who had pillaged his knowledge from a great

man's porter, who has had his information from the great man's gentleman, who has invented the whole story for his own amusement, the night preceding.

The English, in general, seem fonder of gaining the esteem than the love of those they converse with. This gives a formality to their amusements; their gayest conversations have something too wise for innocent relaxation. Though in company you are seldom disgusted with the absurdity of a fool, you are seldom lifted into rapture by those strokes of vivacity which give instant, though not permanent pleasure.

What they want, however, in gayety, they make up in politeness. You smile at hearing me praise the English for their politeness; you have heard very different accounts from the missionaries at Pekin, who have seen such a different behavior in their merchants and seamen at home. But I must still repeat it, — the English seem more polite than any of their neighbors. Their great art in this respect lies in endeavoring, while they oblige, to lessen the force of the favor. Other countries are fond of obliging a stranger, but seem desirous that he should be sensible of the obligation. The English confer their kindness with an appearance of indifference, and give away benefits with an air as if they despised them.

Walking, a few days ago, between an English and a French man, into the suburbs of the city, we were overtaken by a heavy shower of rain. I was unprepared; but they had each large coats, which defended them from what seemed to me a perfect inundation. The Englishman, seeing me shrink from the weather, accosted me thus: "Psha, man! What dost shrink at? Here, take this coat; I don't want it. I find it no way useful to me; I had as lief be without it." The Frenchman began to show his politeness in turn. "My dear friend," cries he, "why won't you oblige me by making use of my coat? You see how well it defends me from the rain; I should not choose to part with it to others, but to such a friend as you I could even part with my skin to do him service."

From such minute instances as these, most reverend Fum Hoam, I am sensible your sagacity will collect instruction. The volume of nature is the book of knowledge, and he becomes most wise who makes the most judicious selection. — Farewell.



## LETTER XIII

I am just returned from Westminster Abbey, the place of sepulture for the philosophers, heroes, and kings of England. What a gloom do monumental inscriptions and all the venerable remains of deceased merit inspire! Imagine a temple marked with the hand of antiquity, solemn as religious awe, adorned with all the magnificence of barbarous profusion, dim windows, fretted pillars, long colonnades, and dark ceilings. Think, then, what were my sensations at being introduced to such a scene. I stood in the midst of the temple, and threw my eyes round on the walls, filled with the statues, the inscriptions, and the monuments of the dead. Alas! I said to myself, how does pride attend the puny child of dust even to the grave! Even humble as I am, I possess more consequence in the present scene than the greatest hero of them all. They have toiled for an hour to gain a transient immortality, and are at length retired to the grave, where they have no attendant but the worm, none to flatter but the epitaph.

As I was indulging such reflections, a gentleman dressed in black, perceiving me to be a stranger, came up, entered into conversation, and politely offered to be my instructor and guide through the temple. "If any monument," said he, "should particularly excite your curiosity, I shall endeavor to satisfy your demands." I accepted with thanks the gentleman's offer, adding that I was come to observe the policy, the wisdom, and the justice of the English, in conferring rewards upon deceased merit. "If adulation like this," continued I, "be properly conducted, as it can no ways injure those who are flattered, so it may be a glorious incentive to those who are now capable of enjoying it. It is the duty of every good government to turn this monumental pride to its own advantage, to become strong in the aggregate from the weakness of the individual. If none but the truly great have a place in this awful repository, a temple like this will give the finest lessons of morality, and be a strong incentive to true ambition. I am told that none have a place here but characters of the most distinguished merit."

The Man in Black seemed impatient at my observations, so I discontinued my remarks, and we walked on together to take a view of every particular monument in order as it lay. As the

eye is naturally caught by the finest objects, I could not avoid being particularly curious about one monument which appeared more beautiful than the rest. "That," said I to my guide, "I take to be the tomb of some very great man. By the peculiar excellence of the workmanship, and the magnificence of the design, this must be a trophy raised to the memory of some king who has saved his country from ruin, or lawgiver who has reduced his fellow-citizens from anarchy into just subjection."

"It is not requisite," replied my companion, smiling, "to have such qualifications in order to have a very fine monument here. More humble abilities will suffice."

"What! I suppose, then, the gaining two or three battles, or the taking half a score towns, is thought a sufficient qualification?"

"Gaining battles or taking towns," replied the Man in Black, "may be of service; but a gentleman may have a very fine monument here without ever seeing a battle or a siege."

"This, then, is the monument of some poet, I presume, — of one whose wit has gained him immortality?"

"No, sir," replied my guide, "the gentleman who lies here never made verses; and as for wit, he despised it in others, because he had none himself."

"Pray tell me, then, in a word," said I, peevishly, "what is the great man who lies here particularly remarkable for?"

"Remarkable, sir?" said my companion. "Why, sir, the gentleman that lies here is remarkable, very remarkable, — for a tomb in Westminster Abbey."

"But, head of my ancestors! how has he got here? I fancy he could never bribe the guardians of the temple to give him a place. Should he not be ashamed to be seen among company where even moderate merit would look like infamy?"

"I suppose," replied the Man in Black, "the gentleman was rich, and his friends, as is usual in such a case, told him he was great. He readily believed them; the guardians of the temple, as they got by the self-delusion, were ready to believe him too. So he paid his money for a fine monument; and the workman, as you see, has made him one of the most beautiful. Think not, however, that this gentleman is singular in his desire of being buried among the great. There are several others in the temple who, hated and shunned by the great while alive, have

come here fully resolved to keep them company now they are dead."

As we walked along to a particular part of the temple, "There," says the gentleman, pointing with his finger, "that is the Poets' Corner. There you see the monuments of Shakespeare, and Milton, and Prior, and Drayton."

"Drayton!" I replied. "I never heard of him before. But I have been told of one Pope — is he there?"

"It is time enough," replied my guide, "these hundred years. He is not long dead; people have not done hating him yet."

"Strange," cried I; "can any be found to hate a man whose life was wholly spent in entertaining and instructing his fellow-creatures?"

"Yes," says my guide, "they hate him for that very reason. There is a set of men called answerers of books, who take upon them to watch the republic of letters, and distribute reputation by the sheet. These answerers have no other employment but to cry out Dunce and Scribbler, to praise the dead and revile the living, to grant a man of confessed abilities some small share of merit, to applaud twenty blockheads in order to gain the reputation of candor, and to revile the moral character of the man whose writings they cannot injure. Such wretches are kept in pay by some mercenary bookseller, or more frequently the bookseller himself takes this dirty work off their hands, as all that is required is to be very abusive and very dull. Every poet of any genius is sure to find such enemies. He feels, though he seems to despise, their malice; they make him miserable here, and in the pursuit of empty fame at last he gains solid anxiety."

"Has this been the case with every poet I see here?" cried I.

"Yes, with every mother's son of them," replied he, "except he happened to be born a mandarin. If he has much money, he may buy reputation from your book-answerers, as well as a monument from the guardians of the temple."

"But are there not some men of distinguished taste, as in China, who are willing to patronize men of merit, and soften the rancor of malevolent dullness?"

"I own there are many," replied the Man in Black. "But alas! sir, the book-answerers crowd about them, and call them-



selves the writers of books, and the patron is too indolent to distinguish. Thus poets are kept at a distance, while their enemies eat up all their rewards at the mandarin's table." . . .

## LETTER XXI

The English are as fond of seeing plays acted as the Chinese; but there is a vast difference in the manner of conducting them. We play our pieces in the open air, the English theirs under cover; we act by daylight, they by the blaze of torches. One of our plays continues eight or ten days successively; an English piece seldom takes up above four hours in the representation.

My companion in black, with whom I am now beginning to contract an intimacy, introduced me a few nights ago to the playhouse, where we placed ourselves conveniently at the foot of the stage. As the curtain was not drawn before my arrival, I had an opportunity of observing the behavior of the spectators, and indulging those reflections which novelty generally inspires. The richest, in general, were placed in the lowest seats, and the poor rose above them in degrees proportioned to their poverty. The order of precedence seemed here inverted; those who were undermost all the day now enjoyed a temporary eminence, and became masters of the ceremonies. It was they who called for the music, indulging every noisy freedom, and testifying all the insolence of beggary in exaltation.

They who held the middle region seemed not so riotous as those above them, nor yet so tame as those below. To judge by their looks, many of them seemed strangers there as well as myself; they were chiefly employed, during this period of expectation, in eating oranges, reading the story of the play, or making assignments.

Those who sat in the lowest rows, which are called the pit, seemed to consider themselves as judges of the merit of the poet and the performers. They were assembled partly to be amused, and partly to show their taste; appearing to labor under that restraint which an affectation of superior discernment generally produces. My companion, however, informed me that not one in a hundred of them knew even the first principles of criticism; that they assumed the right of being censors because there was none to contradict their pretensions, and that every man who

now called himself a connoisseur became such to all intents and purposes.

Those who sat in the boxes appeared in the most unhappy situation of all. The rest of the audience came merely for their own amusement; these, rather to furnish out a part of the entertainment themselves. I could not avoid considering them as acting parts in dumb show, — not a curtesy or nod that was not the result of art; not a look nor a smile that was not designed for murder. Gentlemen and ladies ogled each other through spectacles; for my companion observed that blindness was of late become fashionable. All affected indifference and ease, while their hearts at the same time burnt for conquest. Upon the whole, the lights, the music, the ladies in their gayest dresses, the men with cheerfulness and expectation in their looks, all conspired to make a most agreeable picture, and to fill a heart that sympathizes at human happiness with inexpressible serenity.

The expected time for the play to begin at last arrived. The curtain was drawn, and the actors came on. A woman, who personated a queen, came in curtesying to the audience, who clapped their hands upon her appearance. Clapping of hands is, it seems, the manner of applauding in England; the manner is absurd, but every country, you know, has its peculiar absurdities. I was equally surprised, however, at the submission of the actress, who should have considered herself as a queen, as at the little discernment of the audience who gave her such marks of applause before she attempted to deserve them. Preliminaries between her and the audience being thus adjusted, the dialogue was supported between her and a most hopeful youth, who acted the part of her confidant. They both appeared in extreme distress, for it seems the queen had lost a child some fifteen years before, and still kept its dear resemblance next her heart, while her kind companion bore a part in her sorrows. Her lamentations grew loud; comfort is offered, but she detests the very sound; she bids them preach comfort to the winds. Upon this her husband comes in, who, seeing the queen so much afflicted, can himself hardly refrain from tears, or avoid partaking in the soft distress. After thus grieving through three scenes, the curtain dropped for the first act.

“Truly,” said I to my companion, “these kings and queens

are very much disturbed at no very great misfortunes. Certain I am, were people of humbler stations to act in this manner, they would be thought divested of common sense."

I had scarce finished this observation, when the curtain rose, and the king came on in a violent passion. His wife had, it seems, refused his proffered tenderness, had spurned his royal embrace, and he seemed resolved not to survive her fierce disdain. After he had thus fretted, and the queen had fretted, through the second act, the curtain was let down once more.

"Now," says my companion, "you perceive the king to be a man of spirit; he feels at every pore. One of your phlegmatic sons of clay would have given the queen her own way, and let her come to herself by degrees; but the king is for immediate tenderness, or instant death. Death and tenderness are leading passions of every modern buskined hero; this moment they embrace, and the next stab, mixing daggers and kisses in every period."

I was going to second his remarks, when my attention was engrossed by a new object. A man came in balancing a straw upon his nose, and the audience were clapping their hands in all the raptures of applause. "To what purpose," cried I, "does this unmeaning figure make his appearance? Is he a part of the plot?"

"Unmeaning do you call him?" replied my friend in black. "This is one of the most important characters of the whole play. Nothing pleases the people more than the seeing a straw balanced; there is a great deal of meaning in the straw; there is something suited to every apprehension in the sight, and a fellow possessed of talents like these is sure of making his fortune."

The third act now began, with an actor who came to inform us that he was the villain of the play, and intended to show us strange things before all was over. He was joined by another who seemed as much disposed for mischief as he; their intrigues continued through this whole division. "If that be a villain," said I, "he must be a very stupid one to tell his secrets without being asked; such soliloquies of late are never admitted in China."

The noise of clapping interrupted me once more; a child of six years old was learning to dance on the stage, which gave the



ladies and mandarins infinite satisfaction. "I am sorry," said I, "to see the pretty creature so early learning so bad a trade; dancing being, I presume, as contemptible here as it is in China."

"Quite the reverse," interrupted my companion. "Dancing is a very reputable and genteel employment here; men have a greater chance for encouragement from the merit of their heels than their heads. One who jumps up and flourishes his toes three times before he comes to the ground, may have three hundred a year. He who flourishes them four times gets four hundred; but he who arrives at five is inestimable, and may demand what salary he thinks proper. The female dancers, too, are valued for this sort of jumping and crossing. But the fourth act is begun; let us be attentive."

In the fourth act the queen finds her long-lost child, now grown up into a youth of smart parts and great qualifications; wherefore she wisely considers that the crown will fit his head better than that of her husband, whom she knows to be a driveler. The king discovers her design, and here comes on the deep distress: he loves the queen, and he loves the kingdom; he resolves, therefore, in order to possess both, that her son must die. The queen exclaims at his barbarity, is frantic with rage, and at length, overcome with sorrow, falls into a fit; upon which the curtain drops, and the act is concluded.

"Observe the art of the poet," cries my companion. "When the queen can say no more, she falls into a fit. While thus her eyes are shut, while she is supported in the arms of Abigail, what horrors do we not fancy! We feel it in every nerve. Take my word for it, that fits are the true *aposiopesis* of modern tragedy."

The fifth act began, and a busy piece it was. Scenes shifting, trumpets sounding, mobs hallooing, carpets spreading, guards bustling from one door to another; gods, demons, daggers, racks, and ratsbane. But whether the king was killed, or the queen was drowned, or the son was poisoned, I have absolutely forgotten.

When the play was over, I could not avoid observing that the persons of the drama appeared in as much distress in the first act as the last. "How is it possible," said I, "to sympathize with them through five long acts! Pity is but a short-

lived passion. I hate to hear an actor mouthing trifles; neither startings, strainings, nor attitudes, affect me, unless there be cause. After I have been once or twice deceived by those unmeaning alarms, my heart sleeps in peace, probably unaffected by the principal distress. There should be one great passion aimed at by the actor as well as the poet. All the rest should be subordinate, and only contribute to make that the greater. If the actor, therefore, exclaims upon every occasion in the tones of despair, he attempts to move us too soon; he anticipates the blow, he ceases to affect, though he gains our applause."

I scarce perceived that the audience were almost all departed; wherefore, mixing with the crowd, my companion and I got into the street, where, essaying a hundred obstacles from coach-wheels and palanquin-poles, like birds in their flight through the branches of a forest, after various turnings, we both at length got home in safety. — Adieu.

#### LETTER XLI

Some time since I sent thee, O holy disciple of Confucius, an account of the grand abbey, or mausoleum, of the kings and heroes of this nation. I have since been introduced to a temple not so ancient, but far superior in beauty and magnificence. In this, which is the most considerable of the empire, there are no pompous inscriptions, no flattery paid the dead, but all is elegant and awfully simple. There are, however, a few rags hung round the walls, which have, at a vast expense, been taken from the enemy in the present war. The silk of which they are composed, when new, might be valued at half a string of copper money in China; yet this wise people fitted out a fleet and an army in order to seize them, though now grown old, and scarcely capable of being patched up into a handkerchief. By this conquest the English are said to have gained, and the French to have lost, much honor. Is the honor of European nations placed only in tattered silk?

In this temple I was permitted to remain during the whole service; and were you not already acquainted with the religion of the English, you might from my description be inclined to believe them as grossly idolatrous as the disciples of Lao. The idol which they seem to address strides like a colossus over the door of the inner temple, which here, as with the Jews, is es-

teemed the most sacred part of the building. Its oracles are delivered in a hundred various tones, which seem to inspire the worshipers with enthusiasm and awe. An old woman, who appeared to be the priestess, was employed in various attitudes as she felt the inspiration. When it began to speak, all the people remained fixed in silent attention, nodding assent, looking approbation, appearing highly edified by those sounds which to a stranger might seem inarticulate and unmeaning.

When the idol had done speaking, and the priestess had locked up its lungs with a key, observing almost all the company leaving the temple, I concluded the service was over, and, taking my hat, was going to walk away with the crowd, when I was stopped by the Man in Black, who assured me that the ceremony had scarcely yet begun.

"What!" cried I. "Do I not see almost the whole body of worshipers leaving the church? Would you persuade me that such numbers who profess religion and morality would, in this shameless manner, quit the temple before the service was concluded? You surely mistake; not even the Kalmoucks would be guilty of such an indecency, though all the object of their worship was but a joint-stool."

My friend seemed to blush for his countrymen, assuring me that those whom I saw running away were only a parcel of musical blockheads, whose passion was merely for sounds, and whose heads were as empty as a fiddle-case. "Those who remain behind," says he, "are the true religious. They make use of music to warm their hearts, and to lift them to a proper pitch of rapture. Examine their behavior, and you will confess there are some among us who practice true devotion."

I now looked round me as he directed, but saw nothing of that fervent devotion which he had promised. One of the worshipers appeared to be ogling the company through a glass. Another was fervent, not in addresses to heaven, but to his mistress; a third whispered; a fourth took snuff; and the priest himself, in a drowsy tone, read over the "duties" of the day.

"Bless my eyes!" cried I, as I happened to look toward the door, "what do I see? One of the worshipers fallen fast asleep, and actually sunk down on his cushion! He is now enjoying the benefit of a trance; or does he receive the influence of some mysterious vision?"



"Alas! alas!" replied my companion. "No such thing. He has only had the misfortune of eating too hearty a dinner, and finds it impossible to keep his eyes open."

Turning to another part of the temple, I perceived a young lady just in the same circumstances and attitude. "Strange!" cried I. "Can she too have over-eaten herself?"

"Oh, fie!" replied my friend, "you now grow censorious. She grow drowsy from eating too much! That would be profanation. She only sleeps now from having sat up all night at a brag party."

"Turn me where I will, then," says I, "I can perceive no single symptom of devotion among the worshipers, except from that old woman in the corner, who sits groaning behind the long sticks of a mourning fan. She indeed seems greatly edified with what she hears."

"Ay," replied my friend, "I knew we should find some to catch you. I know her; that is the deaf lady who lives in the cloisters."

In short, the remissness of behavior in almost all the worshipers, and some even of the guardians, struck me with surprise. I had been taught to believe that none were ever promoted to offices in the temple but men remarkable for their superior sanctity, learning, and rectitude; that there was no such thing heard of as persons being introduced into the church merely to oblige a senator, or provide for the younger branch of a noble family. I expected, as their minds were continually set upon heavenly things, to see their eyes directed there also, and hoped from their behavior to perceive their inclinations corresponding with their duty. But I am since informed that some are appointed to preside over temples they never visit, and, while they receive all the money, are contented with letting others do all the good. — Adieu.

#### LETTER LIV

. . . Attracted by the serenity of the evening, my friend and I lately went to gaze upon the company in one of the public walks near the city. Here we sauntered together for some time, either praising the beauty of such as were handsome, or the dresses of such as had nothing else to recommend them. We had gone thus deliberately forward for some time, when, stop-

ping on a sudden, my friend caught me by the elbow, and led me out of the public walk. I could perceive by the quickness of his pace, and by his frequently looking behind, that he was attempting to avoid somebody who followed. We now turned to the right, then to the left; as we went forward, he still went faster; but in vain; the person whom he attempted to escape hunted us through every doubling, and gained upon us each moment; so that at last we fairly stood still, resolving to face what we could not avoid.

Our pursuer soon came up, and joined us with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance. "My dear Drybone," cries he, shaking my friend's hand, "where have you been hiding this half a century? Positively I had fancied you were gone to cultivate matrimony and your estate in the country."

During the reply I had an opportunity of surveying the appearance of our new companion. His hat was pinched up with peculiar smartness; his looks were pale, thin, and sharp; round his neck he wore a broad black ribbon, and in his bosom a buckle studded with glass; his coat was trimmed with tarnished twist; he wore by his side a sword with a black hilt; and his stockings of silk, though newly washed, were grown yellow by long service. I was so much engaged with the peculiarity of his dress that I attended only to the latter part of my friend's reply, in which he complimented Mr. Tibbs on the taste of his clothes and the bloom in his countenance.

"Pshaw, pshaw, Will," cried the figure, "no more of that, if you love me. You know I hate flattery, — on my soul I do; and yet, to be sure, an intimacy with the great will improve one's appearance, and a course of venison will fatten. And yet, faith, I despise the great as much as you do; but there are a great many damned honest fellows among them, and we must not quarrel with one half, because the other wants breeding. If they were all such as my Lord Mudler, one of the most good-natured creatures that ever squeezed a lemon, I should myself be among the number of their admirers. I was yesterday to dine at the Duchess of Piccadilly's. My lord was there. 'Ned,' says he to me, — 'Ned,' says he, 'I'll hold gold to silver I can tell you where you were poaching last night.' 'Poaching, my lord?' says I; 'faith, you have missed already; for I stayed at home, and let the girls poach for me. That's my way; I take a fine

woman as some animals do their prey — stand still, and, swoop, they fall into my mouth.”

“Ah, Tibbs, thou art a happy fellow,” cried my companion, with looks of infinite pity. “I hope your fortune is as much improved as your understanding in such company?”

“Improved!” replied the other. “You shall know — but let it go no farther — a great secret — five hundred a year to begin with — my lord’s word of honor for it. His lordship took me down in his own chariot yesterday, and we had a *tête-à-tête* dinner in the country, where we talked of nothing else.”

“I fancy you forget, sir,” cried I, “you told us but this moment of your dining yesterday in town.”

“Did I say so?” replied he coolly. “To be sure, if I said so, it was so. Dined in town! Egad, now I do remember — I did dine in town; but I dined in the country too; for you must know, my boys, I eat two dinners. By the by, I am grown as nice<sup>1</sup> as the devil in my eating. I’ll tell you a pleasant affair about that. We were a select party of us to dine at Lady Grogram’s, — an affected piece, but let it go no farther — a secret. Well, there happened to be no *asafoetida* in the sauce to a turkey, upon which, says I, ‘I’ll hold a thousand guineas, and say done first, that’ — But, dear Drybone, you are an honest creature; lend me half a crown for a minute or two, or so, just till — But harkee, ask me for it the next time we meet, or it may be twenty to one but I forget to pay you.”

When he left us, our conversation naturally turned upon so extraordinary a character. “His very dress,” cries my friend, “is not less extraordinary than his conduct. If you meet him this day, you will find him in rags; if the next, in embroidery. With those persons of distinction of whom he talks so familiarly, he has scarce a coffee-house acquaintance. However, both for the interests of society, and perhaps for his own, Heaven has made him poor; and while all the world perceive his wants, he fancies them concealed from every eye. An agreeable companion, because he understands flattery; and all must be pleased with the first part of his conversation, though all are sure of its ending with a demand on their purse. While his youth countenances the levity of his conduct, he may thus earn a precarious subsistence; but when age comes on, the gravity of which is

<sup>1</sup> Fastidious.



incompatible with buffoonery, then will he find himself forsaken by all; condemned in the decline of life to hang upon some rich family whom he once despised, there to undergo all the ingenuity of studied contempt, to be employed only as a spy upon the servants, or a bugbear to fright the children into obedience." — Adieu.

## LETTER LV

I am apt to fancy I have contracted a new acquaintance whom it will be no easy matter to shake off. My little beau yesterday overtook me again in one of the public walks, and, slapping me on the shoulder, saluted me with an air of the most perfect familiarity. His dress was the same as usual, except that he had more powder in his hair, wore a dirtier shirt, a pair of temple spectacles, and his hat under his arm.

As I knew him to be a harmless, amusing little thing, I could not return his smiles with any degree of severity; so we walked forward on terms of the utmost intimacy, and in a few minutes discussed all the usual topics preliminary to particular conversation. The oddities that marked his character, however, soon began to appear; he bowed to several well-dressed persons, who, by their manner of returning the compliment, appeared perfect strangers. At intervals he drew out a pocket-book, seeming to take memorandums, before all the company, with much importance and assiduity. In this manner he led me through the length of the whole walk, fretting at his absurdities, and fancying myself laughed at not less than him by every spectator.

When we were got to the end of our procession, "Blast me," cries he, with an air of vivacity, "I never saw the Park so thin in my life before! There's no company at all to-day; not a single face to be seen."

"No company!" interrupted I peevishly; "no company, where there is such a crowd? Why, man, there's too much. What are the thousand that have been laughing at us but company?"

"Lord, my dear," returned he, with the utmost good-humor, "you seem immensely chagrined; but, blast me, when the world laughs at me, I laugh at the world, and so we are even. My Lord Trip, Bill Squash the Creolian, and I, sometimes

make a party at being ridiculous; and so we say and do a thousand things for the joke's sake. But I see you are grave, and if you are for a fine grave sentimental companion, you shall dine with me and my wife to-day; I must insist on't. I'll introduce you to Mrs. Tibbs, a lady of as elegant qualifications as any in nature; she was bred, but that's between ourselves, under the inspection of the Countess of All-night. A charming body of voice; but no more of that — she shall give us a song. You shall see my little girl too, Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Tibbs, a sweet pretty creature! I design her for my Lord Drumstick's eldest son; but that's in friendship — let it go no farther; she's but six years old, and yet she walks a minuet, and plays on the guitar immensely already. I intend she shall be as perfect as possible in every accomplishment. In the first place, I'll make her a scholar; I'll teach her Greek myself, and learn that language purposely to instruct her; but let that be a secret."

Thus saying, without waiting for a reply, he took me by the arm, and hauled me along. We passed through many dark alleys and winding ways; for, from some motives to me unknown, he seemed to have a particular aversion to every frequented street; at last, however, we got to the door of a dismal-looking house in the outlets of the town, where he informed me he chose to reside for the benefit of the air.

We entered the lower door, which ever seemed to lie most hospitably open, and I began to ascend an old and creaking staircase, when, as he mounted to show me the way, he demanded whether I delighted in prospects; to which answering in the affirmative, "Then," says he, "I shall show you one of the most charming in the world, out of my windows; we shall see the ships sailing, and the whole country for twenty miles round, tip-top, quite high. My Lord Swamp would give ten thousand guineas for such a one; but, as I sometimes pleasantly tell him, I always love to keep my prospects at home, that my friends may come to see me the oftener."

By this time we were arrived as high as the stairs would permit us to ascend, till we came to what he was facetiously pleased to call the first floor down the chimney; and knocking at the door, a voice from within demanded, "Who's there?" My conductor answered that it was him. But this not satisfying the querist, the voice again repeated the demand; to which

he answered louder than before; and now the door was opened by an old woman with cautious reluctance.

When we were got in, he welcomed me to his house with great ceremony, and, turning to the old woman, asked where was her lady? "Good troth," replied she, in a peculiar dialect, "she's washing your twa shirts at the next door, because they have taken an oath against lending out the tub any longer."

"My two shirts!" cries he, in a tone that faltered with confusion. "What does the idiot mean?"

"I ken what I mean weel enough," replied the other. "She's washing your twa shirts at the next door, because —"

"Fire and fury! no more of thy stupid explanations!" cried he. "Go and inform her we have got company. Were that Scotch hag," continued he, turning to me, "to be forever in my family, she would never learn politeness, nor forget that absurd poisonous accent of hers, or testify the smallest specimen of breeding or high life; and yet it is very surprising too, as I had her from a parliament man, a friend of mine from the Highlands, one of the politest men in the world; but that's a secret."

We waited some time for Mrs. Tibbs's arrival, during which interval I had a full opportunity of surveying the chamber and all its furniture, which consisted of four chairs with old wrought bottoms, that he assured me were his wife's embroidery; a square table that had been once japanned; a cradle in one corner, a lumbering cabinet in the other; a broken shepherdess, and a mandarin without a head, were stuck over the chimney; and round the walls several paltry unframed pictures, which, he observed, were all his own drawing.

"What do you think, sir, of that head in the corner, done in the manner of Grisoni? There's the true keeping in it; it's my own face, and though there happens to be no likeness, a countess offered me an hundred for its fellow. I refused her, for, hang it! that would be mechanical, you know."

The wife at last made her appearance, at once a slattern and a coquette; much emaciated, but still carrying the remains of beauty. She made twenty apologies for being seen in such an edious dishabille, but hoped to be excused, as she had stayed all night at the Gardens with the Countess, who was excessively fond of the horns.



"And indeed, my dear," added she, turning to her husband, "his lordship drank your health in a bumper."

"Poor Jack!" cries he; "a dear good-natured creature; I know he loves me. But I hope, my dear, you have given orders for dinner. You need make no great preparations neither, — there are but three of us; something elegant and little will do, — a turbot, an ortolan, or a —"

"Or what do you think, my dear," interrupts the wife, "of a nice pretty bit of ox-cheek, piping hot, and dressed with a little of my own sauce?"

"The very thing!" replies he. "It will eat best with some smart bottled beer; but be sure to let us have the sauce his Grace was so fond of. I hate your immense loads of meat; that is country all over; extreme disgusting to those who are in the least acquainted with high life."

By this time my curiosity began to abate, and my appetite to increase. The company of fools may at first make us smile, but at last never fails of rendering us melancholy. I therefore pretended to recollect a prior engagement, and, after having shown my respect to the house, according to the fashion of the English, by giving the old servant a piece of money at the door, I took my leave; Mrs. Tibbs assuring me that dinner, if I stayed, would be ready at least in less than two hours.

#### LETTER XCVIII

I had some intentions lately of going to visit Bedlam, the place where those who go mad are confined. I went to wait upon the Man in Black to be my conductor, but I found him preparing to go to Westminster Hall, where the English hold their courts of justice. It gave me some surprise to find my friend engaged in a lawsuit, but more so when he informed me that it had been depending for several years.

"How is it possible," cried I, "for a man who knows the world to go to law? I am well acquainted with the courts of justice in China; they resemble rat-traps, every one of them, — nothing more easy than to get in, but to get out again is attended with some difficulty, and more cunning than rats are generally found to possess."

"Faith," replied my friend, "I should not have gone to law but that I was assured of success before I began. Things were

presented to me in so alluring a light that I thought by barely declaring myself a candidate for the prize I had nothing more to do than to enjoy the fruits of the victory. Thus have I been upon the eve of an imaginary triumph every term these ten years; have traveled forward with victory ever in my view, but ever out of reach. However, at present I fancy we have hampered our antagonist in such a manner that, without some unforeseen demur, we shall this day lay him fairly on his back."

"If things be so situated," said I, "I don't care if I attend you to the courts, and partake in the pleasure of your success. But prithee," continued I, as we set forward, "what reasons have you to think an affair at last concluded, which has given you so many former disappointments?"

"My lawyer tells me," returned he, "that I have Salkeld and Ventris strong in my favor, and that there are no less than fifteen cases in point."

"I understand," said I. "Those are two of your judges who have already declared their opinions."

"Pardon me," replied my friend, "Salkeld and Ventris are lawyers who some hundred years ago gave their opinions on cases similar to mine. These opinions which make for me, my lawyer is to cite; and those opinions which look another way are cited by the lawyer employed by my antagonist. As I observed, I have Salkeld and Ventris for me; he has Coke and Hale for him; and he that has most opinions is most likely to carry his cause."

"But where is the necessity," cried I, "of prolonging a suit by citing the opinions and reports of others, since the same good sense which determined lawyers in former ages may serve to guide your judges at this day? They at that time gave their opinions only from the light of reason; your judges have the same light at present to direct them; — let me even add, a greater, as in former ages there were many prejudices from which the present is happily free. If arguing from authorities be exploded from every other branch of learning, why should it be particularly adhered to in this? I plainly foresee how such a method of investigation must embarrass every suit, and even perplex the student. Ceremonies will be multiplied, formalities must increase, and more time will thus be spent in learning the arts of litigation than in the discovery of right."

"I see," cries my friend, "that you are for a speedy administration of justice; but all the world will grant that the more time that is taken up in considering any subject, the better it will be understood. Besides, it is the boast of an Englishman that his property is secure, and all the world will grant that a deliberate administration of justice is the best way to secure his property. Why have we so many lawyers, but to secure our property? Why so many formalities, but to secure our property? Not less than one hundred thousand families live in opulence, elegance, and ease, merely by securing our property."

"To embarrass justice," returned I, "by a multiplicity of laws, or to hazard it by a confidence in our judges, are, I grant, the opposite rocks on which legislative wisdom has ever split. In one case, the client resembles that emperor who is said to have been suffocated with the bedclothes which were only designed to keep him warm; in the other, to that town which let the enemy take possession of its walls, in order to show the world how little they depended upon aught but courage for safety. But bless me! what numbers do I see here, all in black — How is it possible that half this multitude find employment?"

"Nothing so easily conceived," returned my companion. "They live by watching each other. For instance, the catch-pole watches the man in debt, the attorney watches the catch-pole, the counselor watches the attorney, the solicitor the counselor, and all find sufficient employment."

"I conceive you," interrupted I. "They watch each other, but it is the client that pays them all for watching. It puts me in mind of a Chinese fable, which is entitled 'Five Animals at a Meal.' A grasshopper, filled with dew, was merrily singing under a shade. A whangam, that eats grasshoppers, had marked it for its prey, and was just stretching forth to devour it. A serpent, that had for a long time fed only on whangams, was coiled up to fasten on the whangam. A yellow bird was just upon the wing to dart upon the serpent. A hawk had just stooped from above to seize the yellow bird. All were intent on their prey, and unmindful of their danger; so the whangam ate the grasshopper, the serpent ate the whangam, the yellow bird the serpent, and the hawk the yellow bird; when, sousing from



on high, a vulture gobbled up the hawk, grasshopper, whangam and all, in a moment."

I had scarce finished my fable, when the lawyer came to inform my friend that his cause was put off till another term, that money was wanted to retain, and that all the world was of opinion that the very next hearing would bring him off victorious. "If so, then," cries my friend, "I believe it will be my wisest way to continue the cause for another term; and in the meantime my friend here and I will go and see Bedlam." — Adieu.

RICHARD HURD  
LETTERS ON CHIVALRY AND ROMANCE

1762

[These letters form one of the landmarks of the "romantic movement," in their daring defense of Gothic or mediæval art. The substance of them may well be compared with certain parts of Warton's *Spenser* (see page 332, above), and with Collins's *Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlands*. The extracts that follow are from Letters I, VI, and XII.]

THE ages we call barbarous present us with many a subject of curious speculation. What, for instance, is more remarkable than the Gothic Chivalry? or than the spirit of Romance, which took its rise from that singular institution?

Nothing in human nature, my dear friend, is without its reasons. The modes and fashions of different times may appear, at first sight, fantastic and unaccountable. But they who look nearly into them discover some latent cause of their production.

Nature once known, no prodigies remain —

as sings our philosophical bard; but to come at this knowledge is the difficulty. Sometimes a close attention to the workings of the human mind is sufficient to lead us to it; sometimes more than that, the diligent observation of what passes without us, is necessary. This last I take to be the case here. The prodigies we are now contemplating had their origin in the barbarous ages. Why then, says the fastidious modern, look any farther for the reason? Why not resolve them at once into the usual caprice and absurdity of barbarians? This, you see, is a short and commodious philosophy. Yet barbarians have their *own*, such as it is, if they are not enlightened by our reason. Shall we then condemn them unheard, or will it not be fair to let them have the telling of their own story?

Would we know from what causes the institution of Chivalry was derived? The time of its birth, the situation of the barbarians amongst whom it arose, must be considered; their wants,

designs, and policies must be explored. We must inquire when, and where, and how it came to pass that the western world became familiarized to this prodigy, which we now start at.

Another thing is full as remarkable, and concerns us more nearly. The spirit of Chivalry was a fire which soon spent itself; but that of Romance, which was kindled at it, burnt long, and continued its light and heat even to the politer ages. The greatest geniuses of our own and foreign countries, such as Ariosto and Tasso in Italy, and Spenser and Milton in England, were seduced by these barbarities of their forefathers; were even charmed by the Gothic romances. Was this caprice and absurdity in them? Or may there not be something in the Gothic romance peculiarly suited to the views of a genius and to the ends of poetry? And may not the philosophic moderns have gone too far, in their perpetual ridicule and contempt of it?

To form a judgment in the case, the rise, progress, and genius of Gothic Chivalry must be explained. The circumstances in the Gothic fictions and manners, which are proper to the ends of poetry (if any such there be) must be pointed out. Reasons for the decline and rejection of the Gothic taste in later times must be given.

You have in these particulars both the subject and the plan of the following Letters.

Let it be no surprise to you that, in the close of my last Letter, I presumed to bring the *Gierusalemme Liberata* into competition with the *Iliad*. So far as the heroic and Gothic manners are the same, the pictures of each, if well taken, must be equally entertaining. But I go further, and maintain that the circumstances in which they differ are clearly to the advantage of the Gothic designers.

You see my purpose is to lead you from this forgotten chivalry to a more amusing subject: I mean the poetry we still read, and which was founded upon it. Much has been said, and with great truth, of the felicity of Homer's age for poetical manners. But, as Homer was a citizen of the world, when he had seen in Greece, on the one hand, the manners he has described, could he, on the other hand, have seen in the West the manners of the feudal ages, I make no doubt but he would certainly have preferred the latter. And the grounds of this preference would, I



suppose, have been *the improved gallantry of the feudal times, and the superior solemnity of their superstitions.*

If any great poet, like Homer, had lived amongst, and sung of, the Gothic knights (for after all Spenser and Tasso came too late, and it was impossible for them to paint truly and perfectly what was no longer seen or believed), this preference, I persuade myself, had been very sensible. But their fortune was not so happy.

*Omnes illacrymabiles  
Urgentur, ignotique longa  
Nocte, carent quia vate sacro.*<sup>1</sup>

As it is, we may take a guess of what the subject was capable of affording to real genius from the rude sketches we have of it in the old romancers. And it is but looking into any of them to be convinced that the gallantry which inspirited the feudal times was of a nature to furnish the poet with finer scenes and subjects of description, in every view, than the simple and uncontrolled barbarity of the Grecian. The principal entertainment arising from the delineation of these, consists in the exercise of the boisterous passions, which are provoked and kept alive from one end of the *Iliad* to the other, by every imaginable scene of rage, revenge, and slaughter. In the other, together with these, the gentler and more humane affections are awakened in us by the most interesting displays of love and friendship; of love elevated to its noblest heights, and of friendship operating on the purest motives. The mere variety of these paintings is a relief to the reader as well as writer. But their beauty, novelty, and pathos give them a vast advantage, on the comparison.

Consider, withal, the surprises, accidents, adventures which probably and naturally attend on the life of wandering knights; the occasion there must be for describing the wonders of different countries, and of presenting to view the manners and policies of distant states, — all which make so conspicuous a part of the materials of the greater poetry. So that, on the whole, though the spirit, passions, rapine, and violence of the two sets of manners were equal, yet there was a dignity, a magnificence, a variety in the feudal, which the other wanted.

As to religious machinery, perhaps the popular system of

<sup>1</sup> “[Many brave men lived before Agamemnon, but] they are all oppressed, unwept and unknown, in endless night, because they lack a sacred bard (to praise them).”

each was equally remote from reason, yet the latter had something in it more amusing, as well as more awakening to the imagination. The current popular tales of elves and fairies were even fitter to take the credulous mind, and charm it into a willing admiration of the specious miracles which wayward fancy delights in, than those of the old traditionary rabble of pagan divinities. And then, for the more solemn fancies of witchcraft and incantation, the horrors of the Gothic were above measure striking and terrible. The mummeries of the pagan priests were childish, but the Gothic enchanters shook and alarmed all nature.

We feel this difference very sensibly, in reading the ancient and modern poets. You would not compare the Canidia of Horace with the Witches of *Macbeth*. And what are Virgil's myrtles dropping blood, to Tasso's enchanted forest? . . .

Without more words you will readily apprehend that the fancies of our modern bards are not only more gallant, but, on a change of the scene, more sublime, more terrible, more alarming, than those of the classic fablers. In a word, you will find that the manners they paint, and the superstitions they adopt, are the more poetical for being Gothic.

. . . At length the magic of the old romances was perfectly dissolved. They began with reflecting an image, indeed, of the feudal manners, but an image magnified and distorted by unskillful designers. Common sense being offended with these perversions of truth and nature (still accounted the more monstrous, as the ancient manners they pretended to copy after were now disused, and of most men forgotten), the next step was to have recourse to allegories. Under this disguise they walked the world a while, the excellence of the moral and the ingenuity of the contrivance making some amends, and being accepted as a sort of apology, for the absurdity of the literal story.

Under this form the tales of fairy kept their ground, and even made their fortune at court, where they became, for two or three reigns, the ordinary entertainment of our princes. But reason in the end (assisted, however, by party and religious prejudices) drove them off the scene, and would endure these lying wonders neither in their own proper shape nor as masked in figures.

Henceforth the taste of wit and poetry took a new turn, and fancy, that had wanted it so long in the world of fiction, was now constrained, against her will, to ally herself with strict truth, if she would gain admittance into reasonable company.

What we have gotten by this revolution, you will say, is a great deal of good sense. What we have lost is a world of fine fabling, the illusion of which is so grateful to the charmed spirit that, in spite of philosophy and fashion, Fairy Spenser still ranks highest among the poets, — I mean with all those who are either come of that house, or have any kindness for it. . . .



# HORACE WALPOLE

## (FOURTH EARL OF ORFORD)

### LETTERS

[Walpole's letters cover a very long period, and form the most numerous of the collections of this letter-loving century. The largest number of them were addressed to his friends George Montagu, Sir Horace Mann, and Henry Conway. Those to Mann came back into Walpole's possession, and he edited them and bequeathed them to a friend, the son of Lady Waldegrave, to be opened when he should reach the age of 25. This occurred in 1810, and the letters were published in 1833. Meantime a portion of his correspondence had been published in 1798, in the year following his death, and other collections have appeared at intervals up to 1905. The edition made by Cunningham (1857-59) includes 2665 letters, and the latest (by Mrs. Paget Toynbee) adds many more.]

TO SIR HORACE MANN

WINDSOR, August 21, 1746.

. . . I CAME from town (for take notice, I put this place upon myself for the country) the day after the execution of the rebel lords.<sup>1</sup> I was not at it, but had two persons come to me directly who were at the next house to the scaffold, and I saw another who was upon it; so that you may depend upon my accounts.

Just before they came out of the Tower, Lord Balmerino drank a bumper to King James's health. As the clock struck ten, they came forth on foot, Lord Kilmarnock all in black, his hair unpowdered in a bag, supported by Forster, the great Presbyterian, and by Mr. Home, a young clergyman, his friend. Lord Balmerino followed, alone, in a blue coat, turned up with red (his rebellious regimentals), a flannel waistcoat, and his shroud beneath; their hearses following. They were conducted to a house near the scaffold; the room forwards had benches for spectators, in the second Lord Kilmarnock was put, and in the third backwards Lord Balmerino; all three chambers hung with black. Here they parted. Balmerino embraced the other, and said, "My lord, I wish I could suffer for both!" He had scarce left him, before he desired again to see him, and then asked

<sup>1</sup> Jacobites, captured and brought to trial after the Battle of Culloden.

him, "My Lord Kilmarnock, do you know anything of the resolution taken in our army, the day before the battle of Culloden, to put the English prisoners to death?" He replied, "My lord, I was not present; but since I came hither, I have had all the reason to believe that there was such order taken; and I hear the Duke has the pocket-book with the order." Balmerino answered, "It was a lie raised to excuse their barbarity to us." Take notice, that the Duke's charging this on Lord Kilmarnock (certainly on misinformation) decided this unhappy man's fate! . . . At last he came to the scaffold, certainly much terrified, but with a resolution that prevented his behaving in the least meanly or unlike a gentleman. He took no notice of the crowd, only to desire that the baize might be lifted up from the rails, that the mob might see the spectacle. He stood and prayed some time with Forster, who wept over him, exhorted and encouraged him. He delivered a long speech to the Sheriff, and with a noble manliness stuck to the recantation he had made at his trial, declaring he wished that all who embarked in the same cause might meet the same fate. He then took off his bag, coat, and waistcoat, with great composure, and after some trouble put on a napkin-cap, and then several times tried the block; the executioner, who was in white, with a white apron, out of tenderness concealing the axe behind himself. At last the Earl knelt down, with a visible unwillingness to depart, and after five minutes dropped his handkerchief, the signal, and his head was cut off at once, only hanging by a bit of skin, and was received in a scarlet cloth by four of the undertaker's men kneeling, who wrapped it up and put it into the coffin with the body, — orders having been given not to expose the heads, as used to be the custom.

The scaffold was immediately new-strewed with sawdust, the block new-covered, the executioner new-dressed, and a new axe brought. Then came old Balmerino, treading with the air of a general. As soon as he mounted the scaffold, he read the inscription on his coffin, as he did again afterwards. He then surveyed the spectators, who were in amazing numbers, even upon masts of ships in the river; and, pulling out his spectacles, read a treasonable speech, which he delivered to the Sheriff, and said the young Pretender was so sweet a Prince that flesh and blood could not resist following him; and, lying down to

try the block, he said, "If I had a thousand lives, I would lay them all down here in the same cause." He said, if he had not taken the sacrament the day before, he would have knocked down Williamson, the lieutenant of the Tower, for his ill usage of him. He took the axe and felt it, and asked the headsman how many blows he had given Lord Kilmarnock, and gave him three guineas. Two clergymen who attended him coming up, he said, "No, gentlemen, I believe you have already done me all the service you can." Then he went to the corner of the scaffold, and called very loud for the warder, to give him his periwig, which he took off, and put on a night-cap of Scotch plaid, and then pulled off his coat and waistcoat and lay down; but, being told he was on the wrong side, vaulted round, and immediately gave the signal by tossing up his arm, as if he were giving the signal for battle. He received three blows, but the first certainly took away all sensation. He was not a quarter of an hour on the scaffold; Lord Kilmarnock above half a one. Balmerino certainly died with the intrepidity of a hero, but with the insensibility of one too. As he walked from his prison to execution, seeing every window and top of house filled with spectators, he cried out, "Look, look! how they are all piled up like rotten oranges!" . . .

TO HON. H. S. CONWAY

TWICKENHAM, June 8, 1747.

You perceive by my date that I am got into a new camp, and have left my tub at Windsor. It is a little plaything-house<sup>1</sup> that I got out of Mrs. Chevenix's shop, and is the prettiest bauble you ever saw. It is set in enameled meadows, with filigree hedges:—

A small Euphrates through the piece is rolled,  
And little finches wave their wings in gold.

Two delightful roads, that you would call dusty, supply me continually with coaches and chaises; barges as solemn as Barons of the Exchequer move under my window; Richmond Hill and Ham walks bound my prospect; but thank God! the Thames is between me and the Duchess of Queensberry. Dowagers as plenty as flounders inhabit all around, and Pope's ghost is just now skimming under my window by a most po-

<sup>1</sup> The nucleus of "Strawberry Castle."



etical moonlight. I have about land enough to keep such a farm as Noah's, when he set up in the ark with a pair of each kind; but my cottage is rather cleaner than I believe his was after they had been cooped up together forty days. The Chevenixes had tricked it out for themselves; up two pair of stairs is what they call Mr. Chevenix's library, furnished with three maps, one shelf, a bust of Sir Isaac Newton, and a lame telescope without any glasses. . . .

I could tell you much election news, — none else; though not being thoroughly attentive to so important a subject as, to be sure, one ought to be, I might now and then mistake, and give you a candidate for Durham in place of one for Southampton, or name the returning officer instead of the candidate. In general, I believe, it is much as usual, — those sold in detail that afterwards will be sold in the representation, — the ministers bribing Jacobites to choose friends of their own, — the name of well-wishers to the present establishment, and patriots outbidding ministers that they may make the better market of their own patriotism. In short, all England, under some name or other, is just now to be bought and sold; though, whenever we become posterity and forefathers, we shall be in high repute for wisdom and virtue. My great-great-grandchildren will figure me with a white beard down to my girdle, and Mr. Pitt's will believe him unspotted enough to have walked over nine hundred hot ploughshares without hurting the sole of his foot. How merry my ghost will be, and shake its ears to hear itself quoted as a person of consummate prudence!

TO SIR HORACE MANN

ARLINGTON STREET, May 17, 1749.

. . . The graver part of the world, who have not been quite so much given up to rockets and masquing, are amused with a book of Lord Bolingbroke's, just published, but written long ago. It is composed of three letters, the first to Lord Cornbury on the Spirit of Patriotism, and two others to Mr. Lyttelton (but with neither of their names) on the Idea of a Patriot King, and the State of Parties on the late King's accession. . . . But there is a Preface to this famous book, which makes much more noise than the work itself. It seems Lord Bolingbroke had originally trusted Pope with the copy, to have half a dozen

printed for particular friends. Pope, who loved money infinitely beyond any friend, got fifteen hundred copies printed privately, intending to outlive Bolingbroke and make great advantage of them; and not only did this, but altered the copy at his pleasure, and even made different alterations in different copies. Where Lord Bolingbroke had strongly flattered their common friend Lyttelton, Pope suppressed the panegyric; where, in compliment to Pope, he had softened the satire on Pope's great friend, Lord Oxford, Pope reinstated the abuse. The first part of this transaction is recorded in the Preface; the two latter facts are reported by Lord Chesterfield and Lyttelton, the latter of whom went to Bolingbroke to ask how he had forfeited his good opinion. In short, it is comfortable to us people of moderate virtue to hear these demigods, and patriots, and philosophers, inform the world of each other's villainies.

STRAWBERRY HILL, June 4, 1749.

. . . In my last I told you some curious anecdotes of another part of the band, of Pope and Bolingbroke. The friends of the former have published twenty pamphlets against the latter; I say against the latter, for, as there is no defending Pope, they are reduced to satirize Bolingbroke. One of them tells him how little he would be known himself from his own writings, if he were not immortalized in Pope's; and, still more justly, that if he destroys Pope's moral character, what will become of his own, which has been retrieved and sanctified by the embalming art of his friend? However, there are still new discoveries made every day of Pope's dirty selfishness. Not content with the great profits which he proposed to make of the work in question, he could not bear that the interest of his money should be lost till Bolingbroke's death, and therefore told him that it would cost very near as much to have the press set for half a dozen copies as it would for a complete edition, and by this means made Lord Bolingbroke pay very near the whole expense of the fifteen hundred. Another story I have been told on this occasion was of a gentleman who, making a visit to Bishop Atterbury in France, thought to make his court by commending Pope. The Bishop replied not; the gentleman doubled the dose; at last the Bishop shook his head, and said, "*Mens curva in corpore curvo!*" The world will now think justly of these men; that

Pope was the greatest poet, but not the most disinterested man in the world, and that Bolingbroke had not all those virtues and not all those talents which the other so proclaimed; and that he did not even deserve the friendship which lent him so much merit; and for the mere loan of which he dissembled attachment to Pope, to whom in his heart he was as perfidious and as false as he has been to the rest of the world. . . .

TO SIR DAVID DALRYMPLE

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STRAWBERRY HILL, April 4, 1760.

. . . At present nothing is talked of, nothing admired, but what I cannot help calling a very insipid and tedious performance. It is a kind of novel, called *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, the great humor of which consists in the whole narration always going backwards. I can conceive a man saying that it would be droll to write a book in that manner, but have no notion of his persevering in executing it. It makes one smile two or three times at the beginning, but in recompense makes one yawn for two hours. The characters are tolerably kept up, but the humor is forever attempted and missed. The best thing in it is a sermon, oddly coupled with a good deal of bawdy, and both the composition of a clergyman. The man's head, indeed, was a little turned before, now topsy-turvy with his success and fame. Dodsley has given him 650 pounds for the second edition and two more volumes (which I suppose will reach backwards to his great-great-grandfather); Lord Fauconberg, a donative of 160 pounds a year; and Bishop Warburton gave him a purse of gold and this compliment (which happened to be a contradiction), "that it was quite an original composition, and in the true Cervantic vein," — the only copy that ever was an original, except in painting, where they all pretend to be so. Warburton, however, not content with this, recommended the book to the bench of Bishops, and told them Mr. Sterne, the author, was the English Rabelais. They had never heard of such a writer.

TO GEORGE MONTAGU

ARLINGTON STREET, November 13, 1760.

. . . Do you know, I had the curiosity to go to the burying<sup>1</sup> t'other night; I had never seen a royal funeral. Nay, I walked

<sup>1</sup> Of George II



as a rag of quality, which I found would be — and so it was — the easiest way of seeing it. It is absolutely a noble sight. The Prince's chamber, hung with purple and a quantity of silver lamps, the coffin under a canopy of purple velvet, and six vast chandeliers of silver on high stands, had a very good effect. The Ambassador from Tripoli and his son were carried to see that chamber. The procession, through a line of foot-guards, every seventh man bearing a torch, the horseguards lining the outside, their officers with drawn sabres and crape sashes on horseback, the drums muffled, the fifes, bells tolling, and minute guns, — all this was very solemn. But the charm was the entrance of the Abbey, where we were received by the Dean and Chapter in rich robes, the choir and almsmen bearing torches; the whole Abbey so illuminated, that one saw it to greater advantage than by day; the tombs, long aisles, and fretted roof, all appearing distinctly, and with the happiest *chiaro scuro*. There wanted nothing but incense, and little chapels here and there, with priests saying mass for the repose of the defunct; yet one could not complain of its not being Catholic enough. . . . When we came to the chapel of Henry the Seventh, all solemnity and decorum ceased. No order was observed, people sat or stood where they could or would; the yeomen of the guard were crying out for help, oppressed by the immense weight of the coffin. The Bishop read sadly, and blundered in the prayers; the fine chapter, "Man that is born of woman," was chanted, not read, and the anthem, besides being immeasurably tedious, would have served as well for a nuptial. The real serious part was the figure of the Duke of Cumberland, heightened by a thousand melancholy circumstances. He had a dark brown adonis, and a cloak of black cloth, with a train of five yards. Attending the funeral of a father could not be pleasant; his leg extremely bad, yet forced to stand upon it near two hours; his face bloated and distorted with his late paralytic stroke, which has affected, too, one of his eyes; and placed over the mouth of the vault, into which, in all probability, he must himself so soon descend; — think how unpleasant a situation! He bore it all with a firm and unaffected countenance. This grave scene was fully contrasted by the burlesque Duke of Newcastle. He fell into a fit of crying the moment he came into the chapel, and flung himself back in a stall, the Archbishop hovering over him with a

smelling-bottle. But in two minutes his curiosity got the better of his hypocrisy, and he ran about the chapel with his glass to spy who was or was not there, spying with one hand, and mopping his eyes with the other. Then returned the fear of catching cold; and the Duke of Cumberland, who was sinking with heat, felt himself weighed down, and, turning round, found it was the Duke of Newcastle standing upon his train, to avoid the chill of the marble. . . .

TO REV. WILLIAM COLE

STRAWBERRY HILL, March 9, 1765.

I had time to write but a short note with the *Castle of Otranto*, as your messenger called on me at four o'clock, as I was going to dine abroad. Your partiality to me and Strawberry have, I hope, inclined you to excuse the wildness of the story. You will even have found some traits to put you in mind of this place. When you read of the picture quitting its panel,<sup>1</sup> did not you recollect the portrait of Lord Falkland, all in white, in my gallery? Shall I even confess to you what was the origin of this romance? I waked one morning, in the beginning of last June, from a dream, of which all I could recover was that I had thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head filled, like mine, with Gothic story), and that on the uppermost bannister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armor. In the evening I sat down, and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. The work grew on my hands, and I grew fond of it; — add that I was very glad to think of anything rather than politics. In short, I was so engrossed with my tale, which I completed in less than two months, that one evening I wrote from the time I had drunk my tea, about six o'clock, till half an hour after one in the morning, when my hand and fingers were so weary that I could not hold the pen to finish the sentence, but left Matilda and Isabella talking, in the middle of a paragraph. You will laugh at my earnestness; but if I have amused you by retracing with any fidelity the manners of ancient days, I am content, and give you leave to think me as idle as you please. . . .

<sup>1</sup> See page 479, below.

TO JOHN CHUTE

BATH, October 10, 1766.

. . . My health advances faster than my amusement. However, I have been at one opera, — Mr. Wesley's.<sup>1</sup> They have boys and girls with charming voices, that sing hymns, in parts, to Scotch ballad tunes; but indeed so long that one would think they were already in eternity, and knew how much time they had before them. The chapel is very neat, with true Gothic windows (yet I am not converted); but I was glad to see that luxury is creeping in upon them before persecution: they have very neat mahogany stands for branches, and brackets of the same taste. At the upper end is a broad *hautpas* of four steps, advancing in the middle; at each end of the broadest part are two eagles, with red cushions for the parson and clerk. Behind them rise three more steps, in the midst of which is a third eagle for pulpit. Scarlet armed chairs to all three. On either side, a balcony for elect ladies. The rest of the congregation sit on forms. Behind the pit, in a dark niche, is a plain table within rails; so you see the throne is for the apostle. Wesley is a lean elderly man, fresh-colored, his hair smoothly combed, but with a *souffçon* of curl at the ends. Wondrous clean, but as evidently an actor as Garrick. He spoke his sermon, but so fast, and with so little accent, that I am sure he has often uttered it, for it was like a lesson. There were parts and eloquence in it; but towards the end he exalted his voice, and acted very ugly enthusiasm; decried learning, and told stories. . . .

TO SIR HORACE MANN

STRAWBERRY HILL, November 24, 1774.

. . . The old French Parliament is restored with great *éclat*. Monsieur de Maurepas, author of the revolution, was received one night at the Opera with boundless shouts of applause. It is even said that the mob intended, when the King should go to hold the *lit de justice*, to draw his coach. How singular it would be if Wilkes's case should be copied for a king of France! Do you think Rousseau was in the right, when he said that he could tell what would be the manners of any capital city, from certain given lights? I don't know what he may do on Constantinople and Pekin — but Paris and London! . . . For our part, I re-

<sup>1</sup> That is, a Methodist meeting.



peat it, we shall contribute nothing to the *Histoire des Mœurs*, not for want of materials, but for want of writers. We have comedies without novelty, gross satires without stings, metaphysical eloquence, and antiquarians that discover nothing.

*Boeotum in crasso jurares aere natos!*<sup>1</sup>

Don't tell me I am grown old and peevish and supercilious, — name the geniuses of 1774, and I submit. The next Augustan age will dawn on the other side of the Atlantic. There will, perhaps, be a Thucydides at Boston, a Xenophon at New York, and, in time, a Virgil at Mexico, and a Newton at Peru. At last, some curious traveler from Lima will visit England, and give a description of the ruins of St. Paul's, like the editions of Balbec and Palmyra. But am I not prophesying, contrary to my consummate prudence, and casting horoscopes of empires like Rousseau? Yes; well, I will go and dream of my visions.

## THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO

1764

[On the origin of this "Gothic romance," see Walpole's letter to Rev. William Cole, quoted on page 474, above. It was published as a translation "from the original Italian of Onuphrio Muralto," — the original work, so the Preface stated, having been printed at Naples, in black letter, in 1529. Considerable interest and mystification followed, until, in a second edition, Walpole admitted the fiction, and explained his intention as being "to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern."]

. . . YOUNG Conrad's birthday was fixed for his espousals. The company was assembled in the chapel of the Castle, and everything ready for beginning the divine office, when Conrad himself was missing. Manfred, impatient of the least delay, and who had not observed his son retire, despatched one of his attendants to summon the young Prince. The servant, who had not stayed long enough to have crossed the court to Conrad's apartment, came running back breathless, in a frantic manner, his eyes staring, and foaming at the mouth. He said nothing, but pointed to the court.

The company were struck with terror and amazement. The

<sup>1</sup> "You would swear they were born in the stupefying air of the Bœotians."

Princess Hippolita, without knowing what was the matter, but anxious for her son, swooned away. Manfred, less apprehensive than enraged at the procrastination of the nuptials, and at the folly of his domestic, asked imperiously what was the matter? The fellow made no answer, but continued pointing towards the court-yard; and at last, after repeated questions put to him, cried out, "Oh! the helmet! the helmet!"

In the mean time, some of the company had run into the court, from whence was heard a confused noise of shrieks, horror, and surprise. Manfred, who began to be alarmed at not seeing his son, went himself to get information of what occasioned this strange confusion. Matilda remained, endeavoring to assist her mother, and Isabella stayed for the same purpose, and to avoid showing any impatience for the bridegroom, — for whom, in truth, she had conceived little affection.

The first thing that struck Manfred's eyes was a group of his servants endeavoring to raise something that appeared to him a mountain of sable plumes. He gazed without believing his sight.

"What are ye doing?" cried Manfred wrathfully. "Where is my son?"

A volley of voices replied, "Oh, my lord! the prince, the prince! The helmet, the helmet!"

Shocked with these lamentable sounds, and dreading he knew not what, he advanced hastily, but — what a sight for a father's eyes! — he beheld his child dashed to pieces, and almost buried under an enormous helmet, an hundred times more large than any casque ever made for human being, and shaded with a proportionable quantity of black feathers.

The horror of the spectacle, the ignorance of all around how this misfortune had happened, and, above all, the tremendous phenomenon before him, took away the Prince's speech. Yet his silence lasted longer than even grief could occasion. He fixed his eyes on what he wished in vain to believe a vision, and seemed less attentive to his loss than buried in meditation on the stupendous object that had occasioned it. He touched, he examined the fatal casque; nor could even the bleeding, mangled remains of the young prince divert the eyes of Manfred from the portent before him. . . .

While the ladies were conveying the wretched mother to her

bed, Manfred remained in the court, gazing on the ominous casque, and regardless of the crowd which the strangeness of the event had now assembled around him. The few words he articulated tended solely to inquiries whether any man knew from whence it could have come. Nobody could give him the least information. However, as it seemed to be the sole object of his curiosity, it soon became so to the rest of the spectators, whose conjectures were as absurd and improbable as the catastrophe itself was unprecedented. In the midst of their senseless guesses, a young peasant, whom rumor had drawn thither from a neighboring village, observed that the miraculous helmet was exactly like that on the figure in black marble of Alfonso the Good, one of their former princes, in the church of St. Nicholas.

"Villain! what sayest thou?" cried Manfred, starting from his trance in a tempest of rage, and seizing the young man by the collar. "How darest thou utter such treason? Thy life shall pay for it."

The spectators, who as little comprehended the cause of the Prince's fury as all the rest they had seen, were at a loss to unravel this new circumstance. The young peasant himself was still more astonished, not conceiving how he had offended the Prince. Yet recollecting himself, with a mixture of grace and humility, he disengaged himself from Manfred's grip, and then, with an obeisance which discovered more jealousy of innocence than dismay, he asked with respect of what he was guilty? Manfred, more enraged at the vigor, however decently exerted, with which the young man had shaken off his hold, than appeased by his submission, ordered his attendants to seize him, and, if he had not been withheld by his friends whom he had invited to the nuptials, would have poignarded the peasant in their arms.

During this altercation, some of the vulgar spectators had run to the great church, which stood near the Castle, and came back open-mouthed, declaring that the helmet was missing from Alfonso's statue.

[On the same evening Manfred declares to Isabella, who was to have been the bride of his son, his intention to divorce his wife Hippolita, and to wed her instead.]

. . . At those words he seized the cold hand of Isabella, who was half dead with fright and horror. She shrieked, and started



from him. Manfred rose to pursue her, when the moon, which was now up, and gleamed in at the opposite casement, presented to his sight the plumes of the fatal helmet, which rose to the height of the windows, waving backwards and forwards in a tempestuous manner, and accompanied with a hollow and rustling sound. Isabella, who gathered courage from her situation, and who dreaded nothing so much as Manfred's pursuit of his declaration, cried: —

“Look, my lord! See, Heaven itself declares against your impious intentions!”

“Heaven nor hell shall impede my designs,” said Manfred, advancing again to seize the princess.

At that instant the portrait of his grandfather, which hung over the bench where they had been sitting, uttered a deep sigh, and heaved its breast. Isabella, whose back was turned to the picture, saw not the motion, nor knew whence the sound came, but started, and said, “Hark, my lord! What sound was that?” and at the same time made towards the door.

Manfred, distracted between the flight of Isabella, who had now reached the stairs, and yet unable to keep his eyes from the picture, which began to move, had, however, advanced some steps after her, still looking backwards on the portrait, when he saw it quit its panel, and descend on the floor with a grave and melancholy air.

“Do I dream?” cried Manfred, returning. “Or are the devils themselves in league against me? Speak, infernal spectre! Or, if thou art my grandsire, why dost thou too conspire against thy wretched descendant, who too dearly pays for —” Ere he could finish the sentence, the vision sighed again, and made a sign to Manfred to follow him.

“Lead on!” cried Manfred. “I will follow thee to the gulf of perdition.”

The spectre marched sedately, but dejected, to the end of the gallery, and turned into a chamber on the right hand. Manfred accompanied him at a little distance, full of anxiety and horror, but resolved. As he would have entered the chamber, the door was clapped to with violence by an invisible hand.

## LAURENCE STERNE

### THE LIFE AND OPINIONS OF TRISTRAM SHANDY, GENTLEMAN

1759-67

[The first two volumes of this unique piece of fiction were published in 1759, and at once made the author's reputation; others followed at intervals, the ninth and last in 1767. (See Walpole's comment on the work, page 472, above.) The extracts here printed are intended to represent both Sterne's type of humor, to which he gave the name "Shandyism," and the characteristic vein of sentiment which gives him a place in the so-called "sentimental movement." They are from Book III, chapter XII; Book VI, chapters XVIII and XIX; Book VII, chapters XXXI-XXXV; Book IX, chapter XXIV.]

#### [THE CRITIC]

... I'LL undertake this moment to prove it to any man in the world, except to a connoisseur: — though I declare I object only to a connoisseur in swearing, — as I would do to a connoisseur in painting, etc., etc., the whole set of 'em are so hung round and befetished with the bobs and trinkets of criticism, — or, to drop my metaphor, which by the by is a pity, for I have fetched it as far as from the coast of Guinea; — their heads, sir, are stuck so full of rules and compasses, and have that eternal propensity to apply them upon all occasions, that a work of genius had better go to the devil at once, than stand to be pricked and tortured to death by 'em.

— "And how did Garrick speak the soliloquy last night?"

"Oh, against all rule, my lord, — most ungrammatically! Betwixt the substantive and the adjective, which should agree together in number, case, and gender, he made a breach thus, — stopping, as if the point wanted settling; — and betwixt the nominative case, which your lordship knows should govern the verb, he suspended his voice in the epilogue a dozen times, three seconds and three-fifths by a stop-watch, my lord, each time."

"Admirable grammarian! But in suspending his voice — was the sense suspended likewise? Did no expression of atti-

tude or countenance fill up the chasm? Was the eye silent? Did you narrowly look?"

"I looked only at the stop-watch, my lord."

"Excellent observer!"

"And what of this new book the whole world makes such a rout about?"

"Oh, 't is out of all plumb, my lord, — quite an irregular thing! Not one of the angles at the four corners was a right angle. I had my rule and compasses, etc., my lord, in my pocket."

"Excellent critic!"

"And for the epic poem your lordship bid me look at, — upon taking the length, breadth, height, and depth of it, and trying them at home upon an exact scale of Bossu's, 't is out, my lord, in every one of its dimensions."

"Admirable connoisseur!"

"And did you step in, to take a look at the grand picture in your way back?"

"'T is a melancholy daub, my lord! Not one principle of the pyramid in any one group! And what a price! — for there is nothing of the coloring of Titian — the expression of Rubens — the grace of Raphael — the purity of Domenichino — the corregiescity of Correggio — the learning of Poussin — the airs of Guido — the taste of the Carrachis — or the grand contour of Angelo!"

Grant me patience, just heaven! Of all the cants which are canted in this canting world, though the cant of hypocrites may be the worst, the cant of criticism is the most tormenting! I would go fifty miles on foot, for I have not a horse worth riding on, to kiss the hand of that man whose generous heart will give up the reins of his imagination into his author's hands, — be pleased he knows not why, and cares not wherefore. . . .

[THE BREECHING OF TRISTRAM]

"We should begin," said my father, turning himself half round in bed, and shifting his pillow a little towards my mother's, as he opened the debate, — "We should begin to think, Mrs. Shandy, of putting this boy into breeches."

"We should so," said my mother.

"We defer it, my dear," quoth my father, "shamefully."



"I think we do, Mr. Shandy," said my mother.

"Not but the child looks extremely well," said my father, "in his vests and tunics."

"He does look very well in them," replied my mother.

"And for that reason it would be almost a sin," added my father, "to take him out of 'em."

"It would so," said my mother.

"But indeed he is growing a very tall lad," rejoined my father.

"He is very tall for his age, indeed," said my mother.

"I can not [making two syllables of it] imagine," quoth my father, "who the deuce he takes after."

"I cannot conceive, for my life," said my mother.

"Humph!" said my father.

The dialogue ceased for a moment.

"I am very short myself," continued my father gravely.

"You are very short, Mr. Shandy," said my mother.

"Humph!" quoth my father to himself, a second time; in muttering which, he plucked his pillow a little further from my mother's, and turning about again, there was an end of the debate for three minutes and a half.

"When he gets these breeches made," cried my father in a higher tone, "he'll look like a beast in 'em."

"He will be very awkward in them at first," replied my mother. . . .

"I am resolved, however," quoth my father, breaking silence the fourth time, "he shall have no pockets in them."

"There is no occasion for any," said my mother.

"I mean in his coat and waistcoat," cried my father.

"I mean so too," replied my mother.

"Though if he gets a gig or top — poor souls! it is a crown and a sceptre to them — they should have where to secure it."

"Order it as you please, Mr. Shandy," replied my mother.

"But don't you think it right?" added my father, pressing the point home to her.

"Perfectly," said my mother, "if it pleases you, Mr. Shandy."

"There's for you!" cried my father, losing temper. "Pleases me! You never will distinguish, Mrs. Shandy, nor shall I ever teach you to do it, betwixt a point of pleasure and point of convenience."

This was on the Sunday night, and further this chapter say-eth not.

After my father had debated the affair of the breeches with my mother, he consulted Albertus Rubenius upon it; and Albertus Rubenius used my father ten times worse in the consultation (if possible) than even my father had used my mother. For as Rubenius had wrote a quarto express, *De re vestiaria veterum*, it was Rubenius's business to have given my father some lights. On the contrary, my father might as well have thought of extracting the seven cardinal virtues out of a long beard, as of extracting a single word out of Rubenius upon the subject.

Upon every other article of ancient dress, Rubenius was very communicative to my father; — gave him a full and satisfactory account of —

The Toga, or loose gown.

The Chlamys.

The Ephod.

The Tunica, or Jacket.

The Synthesis.

The Pænula.

The Lacerna, with its Cucullus.

The Paludamentum.

The Prætexta.

The Sagum, or soldier's jerkin.

The Trabea: of which, according to Suetonius, there were three kinds.

“But what are all these to the breeches?” said my father.

Rubenius threw him down upon the counter all kinds of shoes which had been in fashion with the Romans. There was —

The open shoe.

The close shoe.

The slip shoe.

The wooden shoe.

The soc.

The buskin.

And The military shoe with hobnails in it, which Juvenal takes notice of.

There were The clogs.

The pattins.

The pantoufles.

The brogues.

The sandals, with latches to them.

There was The felt shoe.

The linen shoe.

The laced shoe.

The braided shoe.

The calceus incisus.

And The calceus rostratus.

Rubenius showed my father how well they all fitted, — in what manner they laced on, — with what points, straps, thongs, latches, ribbons, jags, and ends.

“But I want to be informed about the breeches,” said my father.

Albertus Rubenius informed my father that the Romans manufactured stuffs of various fabrics, — some plain, some striped, others diapered throughout the whole contexture of the wool with silk and gold; — that linen did not begin to be in common use till towards the declension of the empire, when the Egyptians, coming to settle amongst them, brought it into vogue. That persons of quality and fortune distinguished themselves by the fineness and whiteness of their clothes, which color (next to purple, which was appropriated to the great offices) they most affected, and wore on their birthdays and public rejoicings. That it appeared from the best historians of those times that they frequently sent their clothes to the fuller, to be cleaned and whitened; but that the inferior people, to avoid that expense, generally wore brown clothes, and of a something coarser texture, — till towards the beginning of Augustus’s reign, when the slave dressed like his master, and almost every distinction of habiliment was lost, but the *latus clavus*.

“And what was the *latus clavus*?” said my father.

Rubenius told him that the point was still litigating amongst the learned; that Egnatius, Sigonius, Bossius Ticinensis, Bayfius, Budæus, Salmasius, Lipsius, Lazius, Isaac Casaubon, and Joseph Scaliger all differed from each other, and he from them. That some took it to be the button, some the coat itself, — others only the color of it; — that the great Bayfius, in his *Wardrobe of the Ancients*, chap. 12, honestly said he knew not



what it was, — whether a tibula, a stud, a button, a loop, a buckle, or clasps and keepers.

My father lost the horse, but not the saddle. “They are hooks and eyes,” said my father. And with hooks and eyes he ordered my breeches to be made.

[AT LYONS]

. . . Having called for my bill, as it was uncertain whether I should return to my inn, I had paid it, had moreover given the maid ten sous, and was just receiving the *dernier compliments* of Monsieur Le Blanc, for a pleasant voyage down the Rhone, when I was stopped at the gate.

’T was by a poor ass, who had just turned in with a couple of large panniers upon his back, to collect eleemosynary turnip-tops and cabbage-leaves, and stood dubious, with his two fore-feet on the inside of the threshold, and with his two hinder feet towards the street, as not knowing very well whether he was to go in or no.

Now ’t is an animal (be in what hurry I may) I cannot bear to strike; — there is a patient endurance of sufferings wrote so unaffectedly in his looks and carriage, which pleads so mightily for him that it always disarms me, and to that degree that I do not like to speak unkindly to him. On the contrary, meet him where I will, — whether in town or country, in cart or under panniers, whether in liberty or bondage, — I have ever something civil to say to him on my part; and as one word begets another (if he has as little to do as I), I generally fall into conversation with him. And surely never is my imagination so busy as in framing his responses from the etchings of his countenance, and, where those carry me not deep enough, in flying from my own heart into his, and seeing what is natural for an ass to think — as well as a man — upon the occasion. In truth, it is the only creature of all the classes of beings below me with whom I can do this; for parrots, jackdaws, etc., I never exchange a word with them, nor with the apes, etc., for pretty near the same reason; they act by rote, as the others speak by it, and equally make me silent. Nay, my dog and my cat, though I value them both (and for my dog he would speak if he could), yet somehow or other they neither of them possess the talents for conversation; — I can make nothing of a discourse

with them, beyond the proposition, the reply, and the rejoinder, which terminated my father's and my mother's conversations in his beds of justice, and those uttered, there's an end of the dialogue — But with an ass I can commune forever.

"Come, Honesty," said I, — seeing it was impracticable to pass betwixt him and the gate, — "art thou for coming in, or going out?"

The ass twisted his head round to look up the street. "Well," replied I, "we'll wait a minute for thy driver."

He turned his head thoughtful about, and looked wistfully the opposite way. "I understand thee perfectly," answered I. "If thou takest a wrong step in this affair, he will cudgel thee to death. Well! a minute is but a minute, and if it saves a fellow-creature a drubbing, it shall not be set down as ill spent."

He was eating the stem of an artichoke as this discourse went on, and in the little peevish contentions of nature betwixt hunger and unsavoriness, had dropped it out of his mouth half a dozen times, and picked it up again. "God help thee, Jack!" said I, "thou hast a bitter breakfast on't, and many a bitter day's labor, and many a bitter blow, I fear, for its wages; 't is all — all bitterness to thee, whatever life is to others. And now thy mouth, if one knew the truth of it, is as bitter, I dare say, as soot" (for he had cast aside the stem), "and thou hast not a friend, perhaps, in all this world, that will give thee a macaroon." — In saying this, I pulled out a paper of 'em, which I had just purchased, and gave him one; and at this moment that I am telling it, my heart smites me, that there was more of pleasantry in the conceit, of seeing how an ass would eat a macaroon, than of benevolence in giving him one, which presided in the act.

When the ass had eaten his macaroon, I pressed him to come in. The poor beast was heavy loaded; his legs seemed to tremble under him; he hung rather backwards, and as I pulled at his halter it broke short in my hand. He looked up pensive in my face, — "Don't thrash me with it, — but if you will, you may." "If I do," said I, "I'll be d — d."

The word was but one-half of it pronounced, like the abbess of Andouillet's (so there was no sin in it), when a person coming in let fall a thundering bastinado upon the poor devil's cropper, which put an end to the ceremony.

. . . It was a commissary sent to me from the post-office, with a rescript in his hand for the payment of some six livres odd sous.

"Upon what account?" said I. "'T is upon the part of the king," replied the commissary, heaving up both his shoulders.

"My good friend," quoth I, "as sure as I am I—and you are you"—

"And who are you?" said he. "Don't puzzle me," said I. "But it is an indubitable verity," continued I, addressing myself to the commissary, changing only the form of my asseveration, "that I owe the king of France nothing but my good-will; for he is a very honest man, and I wish him all health and pastime in the world"—

"*Pardonnez-moi*," replied the commissary, "you are indebted to him six livres four sous, for the next post from hence to St. Fons, in your route to Avignon, — which being a post royal, you pay double for the horses and postilion, — otherwise 't would have amounted to no more than three livres two sous."

"But I don't go by land," said I.

"You may if you please," replied the commissary.

"Your most obedient servant," said I, — making him a low bow.

The commissary, with all the sincerity of grave good breeding, made me one, as low again. I never was more disconcerted with a bow in my life. "The devil take the serious character of these people!" quoth I (aside); "they understand no more of irony than this —"

The comparison was standing close by with his panniers, but something sealed up my lips, — I could not pronounce the name.

"Sir," said I, collecting myself, "it is not my intention to take post."

"But you may," said he, persisting in his first reply, — "you may take post if you choose."

"And I may take salt to my pickled herring," said I, "if I choose. But I do not choose."

"But you must pay for it, whether you do or no."

"Aye! for the salt," said I; "I know" —

"And for the post too," added he.



"Defend me!" cried I. "I travel by water, — I am going down the Rhone this very afternoon; my baggage is in the boat, and I have actually paid nine livres for my passage."

"*C'est tout égal*, — 't is all one," said he.

"*Bon Dieu!* What, pay for the way I go, and for the way I do not go!"

"*C'est tout égal*," replied the commissary.

"The devil it is!" said I. "But I will go to ten thousand Bastilles first. O England! England! thou land of liberty, and climate of good sense! thou tenderest of mothers and gentlest of nurses," cried I, kneeling upon one knee, as I was beginning my apostrophe. . . . "'T is contrary to the law of nature. 'T is contrary to reason. 'T is contrary to the Gospel."

"But not to this," said he, putting a printed paper into my hand, —

*Par Le Roy.*

"'T is a pithy prolegomenon," quoth I; and so read on.

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"By all which it appears," quoth I, having read it over, a little too rapidly, "that if a man sets out in a post-chaise from Paris, he must go on traveling in one all the days of his life, — or pay for it."

"Excuse me," said the commissary; "the spirit of the ordinance is this, — that if you set out with an intention of running post from Paris to Avignon, etc., you shall not change that intention or mode of traveling, without first satisfying the fermiers for two posts further than the place you repent at. And 't is founded," continued he, "upon this, that the revenues are not to fall short through your fickleness."

"O by heavens!" cried I. "If fickleness is taxable in France, we have nothing to do but to make the best peace with you we can."

And so the peace was made. . . .

[MARIA]

. . . I was in the most perfect state of bounty and good-will, and felt the kindest harmony vibrating within me, with every oscillation of the chaise alike; so that whether the roads were

rough or smooth, it made no difference; everything I saw or had to do with touched upon some secret spring either of sentiment or rapture.

They were the sweetest notes I ever heard; and I instantly let down the fore-glass to hear them more distinctly. "'T is Maria," said the postilion, observing I was listening. "Poor Maria," continued he, leaning his body on one side to let me see her, for he was in a line betwixt us, "is sitting upon a bank playing her vespers upon her pipe, with her little goat beside her."

The young fellow uttered this with an accent and a look so perfectly in tune to a feeling heart, that I instantly made a vow I would give him a four-and-twenty sous piece, when I got to Moulins.

"And who is poor Maria?" said I.

"The love and pity of all the villages around us," said the postilion. "It is but three years ago, that the sun did not shine upon so fair, so quick-witted and amiable a maid; and better fate did Maria deserve than to have her banns forbid, by the intrigues of the curate of the parish who published them —"

He was going on, when Maria, who had made a short pause, put the pipe to her mouth, and began the air again. They were the same notes, yet were ten times sweeter. "It is the evening service to the Virgin," said the young man; "but who has taught her to play it, or how she came by her pipe, no one knows. We think that Heaven has assisted her in both, for ever since she has been unsettled in her mind, it seems her only consolation; she has never once had the pipe out of her hand, but plays that service upon it almost night and day."

The postilion delivered this with so much discretion and natural eloquence, that I could not help deciphering something in his face above his condition, and should have sifted out his history, had not poor Maria taken such full possession of me.

We had got up, by this time, almost to the bank where Maria was sitting: she was in a thin white jacket, with her hair — all but two tresses — drawn up into a silk net, with a few olive leaves twisted a little fantastically on one side. She was beautiful; and if ever I felt the full force of an honest heart-ache, it was the moment I saw her.

"God help her, poor damsel! Above a hundred masses," said the postilion, "have been said in the several parish churches

and convents around, for her, but without effect. We have still hopes, as she is sensible for short intervals, that the Virgin at last will restore her to herself; but her parents, who know her best, are hopeless upon that score, and think her senses are lost forever."

As the postilion spoke this, Maria made a cadence so melancholy, so tender and querulous, that I sprung out of the chaise to help her, and found myself sitting betwixt her and her goat before I relapsed from my enthusiasm.

Maria looked wistfully for some time at me, and then at her goat, — and then at me, — and then at her goat again, and so on, alternately.

"Well, Maria," said I, softly, "what resemblance do you find?"

I do entreat the candid reader to believe me, that it was from the humblest conviction of what a beast man is, that I asked the question; and that I would not have let fall an unseasonable pleasantry in the venerable presence of Misery, to be entitled to all the wit that ever Rabelais scattered. And yet I own my heart smote me, and that I so smarted at the very idea of it, that I swore I would set up for wisdom, and utter grave sentences the rest of my days, and never — never attempt again to commit mirth with man, woman, or child, the longest day I had to live.

As for writing nonsense to them, I believe there was a reserve, — but that I leave to the world.

Adieu, Maria! Adieu, poor helpless damsel! Some time, but not now, I may hear thy sorrows from thy own lips. — But I was deceived; for that moment she took her pipe, and told me such a tale of woe with it that I rose up, and with broken and irregular steps walked softly to my chaise.

## A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY THROUGH FRANCE AND ITALY

1768

### PREFACE: IN THE DÉSOBLIGEANT

It must have been observed by many a peripatetic philosopher, that Nature has set up by her own unquestionable authority certain boundaries and fences to circumscribe the dis-



content of man; she has effected her purpose in the quietest and easiest manner, by laying him under almost insuperable obligations to work out his ease, and to sustain his suffering at home. It is there only that she has provided him with the most suitable objects to partake of his happiness, and bear a part of that burden which, in all countries and ages, has ever been too heavy for one pair of shoulders. 'T is true we are endued with an imperfect power of spreading our happiness sometimes beyond her limits, but 't is so ordered that, from the want of languages, connections, and dependencies, and from the difference in educations, customs, and habits, we lie under so many impediments in communicating our sensations out of our own sphere, as often amount to a total impossibility.

It will always follow from hence that the balance of sentimental commerce is always against the expatriated adventurer: he must buy what he has little occasion for, at their own price; his conversation will seldom be taken in exchange for theirs without a large discount; and this, by the by, eternally driving him into the hands of more equitable brokers, for such conversation as he can find, it requires no great spirit of divination to guess at his party.

This brings me to my point, and naturally leads me (if the see-saw of this *Désobligeant* will but let me get on) into the efficient as well as final causes of traveling. Your idle people that leave their native country and go abroad for some reason or reasons which may be derived from one of these general causes —

Infirmity of body,  
Imbecility of the mind, or  
Inevitable necessity.

The two first include all those who travel by land or by water, laboring with pride, curiosity, vanity, or spleen, subdivided and combined *in infinitum*.

The third class includes the whole army of peregrine martyrs; more especially those travelers who set out upon their travels with the benefit of the clergy, either as delinquents traveling under the direction of governors recommended by the magistrate, or young gentlemen transported by the cruelty of parents and guardians, and traveling under the direction of governors recommended by Oxford, Aberdeen, and Glasgow.

There is a fourth class, but their number is so small that they would not deserve a distinction, was it not necessary in a work of this nature to observe the greatest precision and nicety, to avoid a confusion of character. And these men I speak of are such as cross the seas and sojourn in a land of strangers, for various reasons and upon various pretences; but as they might also save themselves and others a great deal of unnecessary trouble by saving their money at home, and as their reasons for traveling are the least complex of any other species of emigrants, I shall distinguish these gentlemen by the name of

Simple Travelers.

Thus the whole circle of travelers may be reduced to the following heads:

Idle Travelers,  
Inquisitive Travelers,  
Lying Travelers,  
Proud Travelers,  
Vain Travelers,  
Splenetic Travelers ;

then follow the Travelers of Necessity,

The delinquent and felonious Traveler,  
The unfortunate and innocent Traveler,  
The simple Traveler,

And last of all (if you please)

The Sentimental Traveler,

meaning thereby myself, who have traveled, and of which I am now sitting down to give an account, — as much out of necessity, and the *besoin de voyager*, as any one in the class. . . .

#### NAMPONT

“And this,” said he, putting the remains of a crust into his wallet, — “and this should have been thy portion,” said he, “hadst thou been alive to have shared it with me.”

I thought by the accent it had been an apostrophe to his child; but 't was to his ass, and to the very ass we had seen dead in the road, which had occasioned La Fleur's misadventure. The man seemed to lament it much, and it instantly brought into my mind Sancho's lamentation for his; but he did it with more true touches of nature.

The mourner was sitting upon a stone bench at the door,

with the ass's pannel and its bridle on one side, which he took up from time to time, then laid them down, looked at them, and shook his head. He then took his crust of bread out of his wallet again, as if to eat it, held it some time in his hand, then laid it upon the bit of his ass's bridle, — looked wistfully at the little arrangement he had made, and then gave a sigh.

The simplicity of his grief drew numbers about him, and La Fleur amongst the rest, whilst the horses were getting ready; as I continued sitting in the post-chaise, I could see and hear over their heads.

He said he had come last from Spain, where he had been from the furthest borders of Franconia, and had got so far on his return home, when his ass died. Every one seemed desirous to know what business could have taken so old and poor a man so far a journey from his own home.

It had pleased Heaven, he said, to bless him with three sons, the finest lads in all Germany; but having in one week lost two of the eldest of them by the smallpox, and the youngest falling ill of the same distemper, he was afraid of being bereft of them all, and made a vow, if Heaven would not take him from him also, he would go in gratitude to St. Iago in Spain.

When the mourner got thus far on his story, he stopped to pay nature his tribute, — and wept bitterly. He said Heaven had accepted the conditions, and that he had set out from his cottage with this poor creature, who had been a patient partner of his journey, — that it had eat the same bread with him all the way, and was unto him as a friend.

Everybody who stood about heard the poor fellow with concern. La Fleur offered him money; — the mourner said he did not want it, — it was not the value of the ass, but the loss of him. The ass, he said, he was assured loved him; and upon this told them a long story of a mischance upon their passage over the Pyrenean mountains, which had separated them from each other three days, during which time the ass had sought him as much as he had sought the ass, and that they had neither scarce eat or drank till they met.

“Thou hast one comfort, friend,” said I, “at least, in the loss of thy poor beast. I’m sure thou hast been a merciful master to him.”

“Alas!” said the mourner, “I thought so, when he was alive;



but now that he is dead I think otherwise. I fear the weight of myself and my afflictions together have been too much for him, — they have shortened the poor creature's days, and I fear I have them to answer for."

Shame on this world! said I to myself. Did we love each other as this poor soul but loved his ass, 't would be something.

#### PARIS

When I got home to my hotel, La Fleur told me I had been inquired after by the Lieutenant de Police. "The deuce take it!" said I; "I know the reason." It is time the reader should know it, for in the order of things in which it happened, it was omitted; not that it was out of my head, but that, had I told it then, it might have been forgot now, — and now is the time I want it.

I had left London with so much precipitation that it never entered my mind that we were at war with France; and had reached Dover, and had looked through my glass at the hills beyond Boulogne, before the idea presented itself, and with this in its train, — that there was no getting there without a passport. Go but to the end of a street, I have a mortal aversion for returning back no wiser than I set out; and as this was one of the greatest efforts I had ever made for knowledge, I could less bear the thoughts of it. So, hearing the Count de ——— had hired the packet, I begged he would take me in his suite. The Count had some little knowledge of me, so made little or no difficulty, — only said his inclination to serve me could reach no further than Calais, as he was to return by way of Brussels to Paris; however, when I had once passed there, I might get to Paris without interruption; but that in Paris I must make friends and shift for myself. "Let me get to Paris, Monsieur Count," said I, "and I shall do very well." So I embarked, and never thought more of the matter.

When La Fleur told me the Lieutenant de Police had been inquiring after me, the thing instantly recurred, and by the time La Fleur had well told me, the master of the hotel came into my room to tell me the same thing, with this addition to it, that my passport had been particularly asked after. The master of the hotel concluded with saying he hoped I had one. "Not I, faith!" said I. The master of the hotel retired three

steps from me, as from an infected person, as I declared this; and poor La Fleur advanced three steps towards me, and with that sort of movement which a good soul makes to succor a distressed one; — the fellow won my heart by it, and from that single trait I knew his character as perfectly, and could rely upon it as firmly, as if he had served me with fidelity for seven years.

"*Mon seigneur!*" cried the master of the hotel, but recollecting himself as he made the exclamation, he instantly changed the tone of it. "If Monsieur," said he, "has not a passport, (*apparemment*) in all likelihood he has friends in Paris who can procure him one." "Not that I know of," quoth I, with an air of indifference. "Then, *certes*," replied he, "you'll be sent to the Bastille or the Chatelet, *au moins*." "Poo!" said I, "the King of France is a good-natured soul, — he'll hurt nobody." "*Cela n'empêche pas*," said he. "You will certainly be sent to the Bastille to-morrow morning." "But I've taken your lodgings for a month," answered I, "and I'll not quit them a day before the time, for all the kings of France in the world." La Fleur whispered in my ear that nobody could oppose the king of France.

"*Pardi!*" said my host. "*Ces Messieurs Anglois sont des gens très extraordinaires!*" And having both said and sworn it, he went out.

I could not find it in my heart to torture La Fleur's with a serious look upon the subject of my embarrassment, which was the reason I had treated it so cavalierly; and to show him how light it lay upon my mind, I dropped the subject entirely, and, whilst he waited upon me at supper, talked to him with more than usual gayety about Paris, and of the Opera Comique. . . .

As for the Bastille, the terror is in the word. Make the most of it you can, said I to myself, the Bastille is but another word for a tower, and a tower is but another word for a house you can't get out of. Mercy on the gouty! for they are in it twice a year. But with nine livres a day, and pen and ink and paper and patience, albeit a man can't get out, he may do very well within — at least for a month or six weeks, at the end of which, if he is a harmless fellow, his innocence appears, and he comes out a better and wiser man than he went in.

I had some occasion (I forget what) to step into the court-

yard, as I settled this account, and remember I walked down stairs in no small triumph with the conceit of my reasoning. Beshrew the sombre pencil! said I vauntingly, for I envy not its power, which paints the evils of life with so hard and deadly a coloring. The mind sits terrified at the objects she has magnified herself, and blackened; reduce them to their proper size and hue, she overlooks them. 'T is true, said I, correcting the proposition, — the Bastille is not an evil to be despised; but strip it of its towers, fill up the fossé, unbarricade the doors, — call it simply a confinement, and suppose 't is some tyrant of a distemper, and not of a man, which holds you in it, — the evil vanishes, and you bear the other half without complaint.

I was interrupted in the hey-day of this soliloquy, with a voice which I took to be of a child, which complained "it could not get out." I looked up and down the passage, and seeing neither man, woman, or child, I went out without further attention. In my return back through the passage, I heard the same words repeated twice over; and, looking up, I saw it was a starling hung in a little cage. "I can't get out, I can't get out!" said the starling.

I stood looking at the bird; and to every person who came through the passage it ran, fluttering to the side towards which they approached it, with the same lamentation of its captivity. "I can't get out!" said the starling.

"God help thee!" said I, "but I'll let thee out, cost what it will." So I turned about the cage to get to the door; it was twisted and double twisted so fast with wire, there was no getting it open without pulling the cage to pieces; — I took both hands to it.

The bird flew to the place where I was attempting his deliverance, and, thrusting his head through the trellis, pressed his breast against it, as if impatient. "I fear, poor creature," said I, "I cannot set thee at liberty." "No," said the starling, "I can't get out — I can't get out!" said the starling.

I vow I never had my affections more tenderly awakened; or do I remember an incident in my life, where the dissipated spirits, to which my reason had been a bubble, were so suddenly called home. Mechanical as the notes were, yet so true in tune to nature were they chanted, that in one moment they overthrew all my systematic reasonings upon the Bastille; and



I heavily walked upstairs, unsaying every word I had said in going down them.

Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still, Slavery! said I, — still thou art a bitter draught! And though thousands in all ages have been made to drink of thee, thou art no less bitter on that account. — 'T is thou, thrice sweet and gracious goddess, — addressing myself to Liberty — whom all in public or in private worship, whose taste is grateful, and ever will be so, till Nature herself shall change! No tint of words can spot thy snowy mantle, or chemic power turn thy sceptre into iron. With thee to smile upon him as he eats his crust, the swain is happier than his monarch, from whose court thou art exiled. Gracious Heaven! cried I, kneeling down upon the last step but one in my ascent, — grant me but health, thou great Bestower of it, and give me but this fair goddess as my companion, and shower down thy mitres, if it seems good unto thy divine providence, upon those heads which are aching for them.

The bird in his cage pursued me into my room. I sat down close to my table, and, leaning my head upon my hand, I began to figure to myself the miseries of confinement. I was in a right frame for it, and so I gave full scope to my imagination.

I was going to begin with the millions of my fellow-creatures, born to no inheritance but slavery; but finding, however affecting the picture was, that I could not bring it near me, and that the multitude of sad groups in it did but distract me, I took a single captive, and, having first shut him up in his dungeon, I then looked through the twilight of his grated door to take his picture.

I beheld his body half wasted away with long expectation and confinement, and felt what kind of sickness of the heart it was which arises from hope deferred. Upon looking nearer, I saw him pale and feverish; in thirty years the western breeze had not once fanned his blood, — he had seen no sun, no moon, in all that time, nor had the voice of friend or kinsman breathed through his lattice; — his children —

But here my heart began to bleed, and I was forced to go on with another part of the portrait.

He was sitting upon the ground, upon a little straw, in the furthest corner of his dungeon, which was alternately his chair and bed. A little calendar of small sticks were laid at the head,

notched all over with the dismal days and nights he had passed there; he had one of these little sticks in his hand, and with a rusty nail he was etching another day of misery to add to the heap. As I darkened the little light he had, he lifted up a hopeless eye towards the door, then cast it down, — shook his head, and went on with his work of affliction. I heard his chains upon his legs, as he turned his body to lay his little stick upon the bundle. He gave a deep sigh, — I saw the iron enter into his soul. I burst into tears, — I could not sustain the picture of confinement which my fancy had drawn. I started up from my chair, and called *La Fleur*; I bid him bespeak me a remise, and have it ready at the door of the hotel by nine in the morning.

#### MOULINES

I never felt what the distress of plenty was in any one shape till now, — to travel it through the Bourbonnois, the sweetest part of France, in the hey-day of the vintage, when Nature is pouring her abundance into every one's lap, and every eye is lifted up, — a journey through each step of which Music beats time to Labor, and all her children are rejoicing as they carry in their clusters, — to pass through this with my affections flying out and kindling at every group before me — and every one of them was pregnant with adventures. Just Heaven! it would fill up twenty volumes; and alas! I have but a few small pages left of this to crowd it into, — and half of these must be taken up with the poor Maria my friend Mr. Shandy met with near Moulines.

The story he had told of that disordered maid affected me not a little in the reading; but when I got within the neighborhood where she lived, it returned so strong into my mind, that I could not resist an impulse which prompted me to go half a league out of the road, to the village where her parents dwelt, to inquire after her. 'T is going, I own, like the Knight of the Woeful Countenance, in quest of melancholy adventures; but I know not how it is, but I am never so perfectly conscious of the existence of a soul within me, as when I am entangled in them.

The old mother came to the door. Her looks told me the story before she opened her mouth; she had lost her husband. He had died, she said, of anguish, for the loss of Maria's senses, about a month before. She had feared, at first, she added,

that it would have plundered her poor girl of what little understanding was left; but on the contrary it had brought her more to herself. Still she could not rest; — her poor daughter, she said, crying, was wandering somewhere about the road. —

Why does my pulse beat languid as I write this? And what made La Fleur, whose heart seemed only to be tuned to joy, to pass the back of his hand twice across his eyes, as the woman stood and told it? I beckoned to the postilion to turn back into the road.

When we had got within half a league of Moulines, at a little opening in the road leading to a thicket, I discovered poor Maria sitting under a poplar; — she was sitting with her elbow in her lap, and her head leaning on one side within her hand. A small brook ran at the foot of the tree.

I bid the postilion go on with the chaise to Moulines, and La Fleur to bespeak my supper; and that I would walk after him.

She was dressed in white, and much as my friend described her, except that her hair hung loose, which before was twisted within a silk net. She had, superadded likewise to her jacket, a pale green ribbon, which fell across her shoulder to the waist, at the end of which hung her pipe. Her goat had been as faithless as her lover, and she had got a little dog in lieu of him, which she had kept tied by a string to her girdle; as I looked at her dog, she drew him towards her with the string. "Thou shalt not leave me, Sylvio," said she. I looked in Maria's eyes, and saw she was thinking more of her father than of her lover or her little goat; for as she uttered them the tears trickled down her cheeks.

I sat down close by her, and Maria let me wipe them away as they fell, with my handkerchief. I then steeped it in my own, — and then in hers — and then in mine — and then I wiped hers again, — and as I did it, I felt such undescribable emotions within me, as I am sure could not be accounted for from any combinations of matter and motion.

I am positive I have a soul; nor can all the books with which materialists have pestered the world ever convince me to the contrary.

When Maria had come a little to herself, I asked her if she remembered a pale thin person of a man, who had sat down



betwixt her and her goat about two years before? She said she was unsettled much at that time, but remembered it upon two accounts, — that, ill as she was, she saw the person pitied her; and next, that her goat had stolen his handkerchief, and she had beat him for the theft; — she had washed it, she said, in the brook, and kept it ever since in her pocket, to restore it to him in case she should ever see him again, — which, she added, he had half promised her. As she told me this, she took the handkerchief out of her pocket to let me see it; she had folded it up neatly in a couple of vine-leaves, tied round with a tendril. On opening it, I saw an S. marked in one of the corners.

She had since that, she told me, strayed as far as Rome, and walked round St. Peter's once, and returned back; that she found her way alone across the Apennines, — had traveled over all Lombardy without money, and through the flinty roads of Savoy without shoes. How she had borne it, and how she had got supported, she could not tell; "but God tempers the wind," said Maria, "to the shorn lamb."

"Shorn indeed! and to the quick," said I. "And wast thou in my own land, where I have a cottage, I would take thee to it and shelter thee. Thou shouldst eat of my own bread, and drink of my own cup; I would be kind to thy Sylvio; in all thy weaknesses and wanderings I would seek after thee and bring thee back. When the sun went down I would say my prayers, and when I had done thou shouldst play thy evening song upon thy pipe, nor would the incense of my sacrifice be worse accepted for entering heaven along with that of a broken heart."

Nature melted within me, as I uttered this; and Maria, observing, as I took out my handkerchief, that it was steeped too much already to be of use, would needs go wash it in the stream. "And where will you dry it, Maria?" said I. "I'll dry it in my bosom," said she; "'t will do me good." "And is your heart still so warm, Maria?" said I.

I touched upon the string on which hung all her sorrows; — she looked with wistful disorder for some time in my face, and then, without saying anything, took her pipe and played her service to the Virgin. The string I had touched ceased to vibrate; in a moment or two Maria returned to herself, let her pipe fall, and rose up.

"And where are you going, Maria?" said I. She said, to

Moulines. "Let us go," said I, "together." Maria put her arm within mine, and lengthening the string, to let the dog follow — in that order we entered Moulines.

Though I hate salutations and greetings in the market-place, yet when we got into the middle of this, I stopped to take my last look and last farewell of Maria.

Maria, though not tall, was nevertheless of the first order of fine forms; affliction had touched her looks with something that was scarce earthly, — still she was feminine; and so much was there about her of all that the heart wishes, or the eye looks for in woman, that, could the traces be ever worn out of her brain, and those of Eliza out of mine, she should not only eat of my bread and drink of my own cup, but Maria should lie in my bosom, and be unto me as a daughter.

Adieu, poor luckless maiden! Imbibe the oil and wine which the compassion of a stranger, as he journeyeth on his way, now pours into thy wounds; the Being who has twice bruised thee can only bind them up forever.

TOBIAS GEORGE SMOLLETT  
THE EXPEDITION OF HUMPHREY CLINKER

1771

[The epistolary form of *Humphrey Clinker* gave Smollett the opportunity to make it a medium of no little description and comment on contemporary life and interests, as well as a novel. It is only this incidental aspect which is represented by the following extracts, which present contrasting views of eighteenth century London, from the standpoints of different members of the same party of travelers. The cant piety of the style of the serving-woman is a reflection of the Wesleyan movement, at this period sufficiently conspicuous to become the object of satire.]

*Squire Bramble to Dr. Lewis*

LONDON, May 29.

DEAR DOCTOR: London is literally new to me; new in its streets, houses, and even in its situation. As the Irishman said, "London is now gone out of town." What I left open fields, producing hay and corn, I now find covered with streets and squares and palaces and churches. I am credibly informed that, in the space of seven years, eleven thousand new houses have been built in one quarter of Westminster, exclusive of what is daily added to other parts of this unwieldy metropolis. Pimlico and Knightsbridge are now almost joined to Chelsea and Kensington; and if this infatuation continues for half a century, I suppose the whole county of Middlesex will be covered with brick.

It must be allowed, indeed, for the credit of the present age, that London and Westminster are much better paved and lighted than they were formerly. The new streets are spacious, regular, and airy, and the houses generally convenient. The bridge at Blackfriars is a noble monument of taste and public spirit, — I wonder how they stumbled on a work of such magnificence and utility. But, notwithstanding these improvements, the capital is become an overgrown monster, which, like a dropsical head, will in time leave the body and extremities without nourishment and support. The absurdity will appear



in its full force when we consider that one sixth part of the natives of this whole extensive kingdom is crowded within the bills of mortality.<sup>1</sup> What wonder that our villages are depopulated, and our farms in want of day-laborers? The abolition of small farms is but one cause of the decrease of population. Indeed, the incredible increase of horses and black cattle, to answer the purposes of luxury, requires a prodigious quantity of hay and grass, which are raised and managed without much labor; but a number of hands will always be wanted for the different branches of agriculture, whether the farms be large or small. The tide of luxury has swept all the inhabitants from the open country. The poorest squire, as well as the richest peer, must have his house in town, and make a figure with an extraordinary number of domestics. The ploughboys, cowherds, and lower hinds are debauched and seduced by the appearance and discourse of those coxcombs in livery, when they make their summer excursions. They desert their dirt and drudgery, and swarm up to London in hopes of getting into service, where they can live luxuriously and wear fine clothes, without being obliged to work; for idleness is natural to man. Great numbers of these, being disappointed in their expectation, become thieves and sharpers; and London, being an immense wilderness, in which there is neither watch nor ward of any signification, nor any order of police, affords them lurking-places as well as prey.

There are many causes that contribute to the daily increase of this enormous mass, but they may be all resolved into the grand source of luxury and corruption. About five-and-twenty years ago, very few even of the most opulent citizens of London kept any equipage, or even any servants in livery. Their tables produced nothing but plain boiled and roasted, with a bottle of port and a tankard of beer. At present, every trader in any degree of credit, every broker and attorney, maintains a couple of footmen, a coachman, and postilion. He has his town house and his country house, his coach and his post-chaise. His wife and daughters appear in the richest stuffs, bespangled with diamonds. They frequent the court, the opera, the theatre, and the masquerade. They hold assemblies at

<sup>1</sup> A term applied to a district in London, consisting of 109 parishes, to which for a long time the weekly "bills" (reports) of mortality were confined.

their own houses; they make sumptuous entertainments, and treat with the richest wines of Bordeaux, Burgundy, and Champagne. The substantial tradesman, who was wont to pass his evenings at the ale-house for fourpence-halfpenny, now spends three shillings at the tavern, while his wife keeps card-tables at home; she must also have fine clothes, her chaise, or pad, with country lodgings, and go three times a week to public diversions. Every clerk, apprentice, and even waiter of a tavern or coffee-house, maintains a gelding by himself, or in partnership, and assumes the air and apparel of a *petit-mâitre*. The gayest places of public entertainment are filled with fashionable figures, which, upon inquiry, will be found to be journeymen-tailors, serving-men, and abigails, disguised like their betters. In short, there is no distinction or subordination left. The different departments of life are jumbled together. The hod-carrier, the low mechanic, the tapster, the publican, the shopkeeper, the pettifogger, the citizen, and courtier, all tread upon the kibes of one another. Actuated by the demons of profligacy and licentiousness, they are seen everywhere, rambling, riding, rolling, rushing, jostling, mixing, bouncing, cracking, and crashing in one vile ferment of stupidity and corruption. All is tumult and hurry; one would imagine they were impelled by some disorder of the brain, that will not suffer them to be at rest. . . .

The diversions of the times are not ill suited to the genius of this incongruous monster called the public. Give it noise, confusion, glare, glitter; it has no idea of elegance and propriety. What are the amusements at Ranelagh? One half of the company are following one another's tails, in an eternal circle, like so many blind asses in an olive-mill, where they can neither discourse, distinguish, nor be distinguished; while the other half are drinking hot water, under the denomination of tea, till nine or ten o'clock at night, to keep them awake for the rest of the evening. As for the orchestra, the vocal music especially, it is well for the performers that they cannot be heard distinctly. Vauxhall is a composition of baubles, overcharged with paltry ornaments, ill conceived and poorly executed, without any unity of design or propriety of disposition. It is an unnatural assemblage of objects, fantastically illuminated in broken masses, seemingly contrived to dazzle the eyes and divert the

imagination of the vulgar. Here a wooden lion — there a stone statue; in one place a range of things like coffee-house boxes, covered a-top; in another, a parcel of ale-house benches; in a third, a puppet-show representation of a tin cascade; in a fourth, a gloomy cave of a circular form, like a sepulchral vault, half lighted; in a fifth, a scanty slip of grass-plot that would not afford pasture sufficient for an ass's colt. The walks, which nature seems to have intended for solitude, shade, and silence, are filled with crowds of noisy people, sucking up the nocturnal rheums of an aguish climate; and through these gay scenes a few lamps glimmer like so many farthing candles. . . .

June 8.

. . . I am pent up in frowsy lodgings, where there is not room enough to swing a cat, and I breathe the steams of endless putrefaction; and these would undoubtedly produce a pestilence, if they were not qualified by the gross acid of seacoal, which is in itself a pernicious nuisance to lungs of any delicacy of texture; but even this boasted corrector cannot prevent those languid, sallow looks, that distinguish the inhabitants of London from those ruddy swains that lead a country life. I go to bed after midnight, jaded and restless from the dissipations of the day. I start every hour from my sleep, at the horrid noise of the watchmen bawling the hour through every street, and thundering at every door; — a set of useless fellows, who serve no other purpose but that of disturbing the repose of the inhabitants. And by five o'clock I start out of bed in consequence of the still more dreadful alarm made by the country carts and noisy rustics bellowing green peas under my window. If I would drink water, I must quaff the mawkish contents of an open aqueduct, exposed to all manner of defilement, or swallow that which comes from the river Thames, impregnated with all the filth of London and Westminster; . . . composed of all the drugs, materials, and poisons used in mechanics and manufactures, enriched with the putrefying carcasses of beasts and men, and mixed with the scourings of all the wash-tubs, kennels, and common sewers within the bills of mortality. . . .

It must be owned that Covent Garden affords some good fruit; which, however, is always engrossed by a few individuals



of overgrown fortune, at an exorbitant price, so that little else than the refuse of the market falls to the share of the community; and that is distributed by such filthy hands as I cannot look at without loathing. . . . I need not dwell upon the pallid, contaminated mash which they call strawberries, soiled and tossed by greasy paws through twenty baskets crusted with dirt, and then presented with the worst milk, thickened with the worst flour into a bad likeness of cream. But the milk itself should not pass unanalyzed, — the produce of faded cabbage-leaves and sour draff, lowered with hot water, frothed with bruised snails, carried through the streets in open pails, exposed to foul rinsings discharged from doors and windows, overflowings from mud-carts, splatterings from coach-wheels, dirt and trash chucked into it by roguish boys. . . .

A companionable man will undoubtedly put up with many inconveniences for the sake of enjoying agreeable society. A facetious friend of mine used to say the wine could not be bad where the company was agreeable, — a maxim which, however, ought to be taken *cum grano salis*. But what is the society of London, that I should be tempted for its sake to mortify my senses, and compound with such uncleanness as my soul abhors? All the people I see are too much engrossed by schemes of interest or ambition, to have any room left for sentiment or friendship. Even in some of my old acquaintance, those schemes and pursuits have obliterated all traces of our former connection. Conversation is reduced to party disputes and illiberal altercation; social commerce to formal visits and card-playing. If you pick up a diverting original by accident, it may be dangerous to amuse yourself with his oddities; he is generally a Tartar at bottom, — a sharper, a spy, or a lunatic. Every person you deal with endeavors to over-reach you in the way of business. You are preyed upon by idle mendicants, who beg in the phrase of borrowing and live on the spoils of the stranger; your tradesmen are without conscience, your friends without affection, and your dependents without fidelity. . . .

*Lydia Melford to Letitia Willis*

LONDON, May 31.

MY DEAR LETTY: . . . About five weeks ago we arrived in London, after an easy journey from Bath; during which, how-

ever, we were overturned, and met with some other little incidents which had like to have occasioned a misunderstanding betwixt my uncle and aunt. But now, thank God, they are happily reconciled; we live in harmony together, and every day make parties to see the wonders of this vast metropolis, — which, however, I cannot pretend to describe, for I have not yet seen one hundredth part of its curiosities, and I am quite in a maze of admiration. The cities of London and Westminster are spread out to an incredible extent. The streets, squares, rows, lanes, and alleys are innumerable. Palaces, public buildings, and churches rise in every quarter, and amongst these last St. Paul's appears with the most astonishing preëminence. They say it is not so large as St. Peter's at Rome, but for my own part I can have no idea of any earthly temple more grand and magnificent.

But even these superb objects are not so striking as the crowds of people that swarm in the streets. I at first imagined that some great assembly was just dismissed, and wanted to stand aside till the multitude should pass; but this human tide continues to flow, without interruption or abatement, from morn till night. Then there is such an infinity of gay equipages, coaches, chariots, chaises, and other carriages, continually rolling and shifting before your eyes, that one's head grows giddy looking at them, and the imagination is quite confounded with splendor and variety. Nor is the prospect by water less grand and astonishing than that by land: you see three stupendous bridges, joining the opposite banks of a broad, deep, and rapid river, so vast, so stately, so elegant, that they seem to be the work of the giants; betwixt them the whole surface of the Thames is covered with small vessels, — barges, boats, and wherries, passing to and fro; and below the three bridges such a prodigious forest of masts, for miles together, that you would think all the ships in the universe were here assembled. All that you read of wealth and grandeur in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* and the *Persian Tales*, concerning Bagdad, Diarbekir, Damascus, Ispahan, and Samarcand, is here realized. Ranelagh looks like the enchanted palace of a genie, adorned with the most exquisite performances of painting, carving, and gilding, enlightened with a thousand golden lamps that emulate the noonday sun; crowded with the great, the

rich, the gay, the happy, and the fair, glittering with cloth of gold and silver, lace, embroidery, and precious stones. While these exulting sons and daughters of felicity tread this round of pleasure, or regale in different parties and separate lodges, with fine imperial tea and other delicious refreshments, their ears are entertained with the most ravishing delights of music, both instrumental and vocal. . . .

At nine o'clock in a charming moonlight evening, we embarked at Ranelagh for Vauxhall, in a wherry so light and slender that we looked like so many fairies sailing in a nutshell. . . . The pleasure of this little excursion was, however, damped by my being sadly frightened at our landing, where there was a terrible confusion of wherries, and a crowd of people bawling and swearing and quarreling; nay, a parcel of ugly-looking fellows came running into the water, and laid hold on our boat with great violence, to pull it ashore, nor would they quit their hold till my brother struck one of them over the head with his cane. But this flutter was fully recompensed by the pleasures of Vauxhall, which I no sooner entered, than I was dazzled and confounded with the variety of beauties that rushed all at once on my eye. Imagine to yourself, my dear Letty, a spacious garden, part laid out in delightful walks, bounded with high hedges and trees, and paved with gravel; part exhibiting a wonderful assemblage of the most picturesque and striking objects, — pavilions, lodges, groves, grottoes, lawns, temples, and cascades, porticoes, colonnades, and rotundas, adorned with pillars, statues, and paintings; the whole illuminated with an infinite number of lamps, disposed in different figures of suns, stars, and constellations, — the place crowded with the gayest company, ranging through those blissful shades or supping in different lodges on cold collations, enlivened with mirth, freedom, and good humor, and animated by an excellent band of music. . . .

*Winifred Jenkins to Mary Jones*

LONDON, June 3.

. . . O Molly! what shall I say of London? All the towns that ever I beheld in my born days are no more than Welsh barrows and crumlecks to this wonderful sitty! Even Bath itself is but a fillitch; in the naam of God — one would think



there's no end of the streets, but the land's end. Then there's such a power of people, going hurry skurry! Such a racket of coxes! Such a noise and hallibaloo! So many strange sights to be seen! O gracious! my poor Welsh brain has been spinning like a top ever since I came hither! And I have seen the park, and the paleass of Saint Gimses, and the king's and the queen's magisterian pursing, and the sweet young princes, and the hillyfents, and pye-bald ass, and all the rest of the royal family.

Last week I went with mistress to the Tower, to see the crowns and wild beasts; and there was a monstracious lion, with teeth half a quarter long! . . . I was afterwards of a party at Sadler's Wells, where I saw such tumbling and dancing upon ropes and wires, that I was frightened, and ready to go into a fit. I tho't it was all inchantment, and believing myself bewitched, began for to cry. You knows as how the witches in Wales fly on broomsticks; but here was flying without any broomstick, or thing in the varsal world, and firing of pistols in the air, and blowing of trumpets, and swinging, and rolling of wheelbarrows on a wire (God bliss us!) no thicker than a sewing-thread; that, to be sure, they must deal with the devil. A fine gentleman, with a pig's tail and a golden sord by his side, came to comfit me, and offered for to treat me to a pint of wind; but I would not stay; and so, in going through the dark passage, he began to show his cloven futt, and went for to be rude. My fellow-sarvant Umphry Klinker bid him be sivil, and he gave the young man a douse in the chops; but, i'fackins, Mr. Klinker was n't long in his debt; with a good oaken sapling he dusted his doublet, for all his golden cheese-toaster, and fipping me under his arm, carried me huom, I nose not how, being I was in such a flustration. But, thank God! I'm now vaned from all such vanities; for what are those rarities and vagaries to the glories that shall be revealed hereafter! O Molly! let not your poor heart be puffed up with vanity.

I had almost forgot to tell you that I have had my hair cut and pippered, and singed, and bolstered, and buckled in the newest fashion, by a French freezer — "Parley vow Francey — Vee madmansell!" I now carries my head higher than arrow private gentlewoman of Vales. Last night, coming huom from the meeting, I was taken by lamplight for an imminent

poultercrer's daughter, a great beauty, — but, as I was saying, this is all vanity and vexation of spirit. The pleasures of London are no better than sower whey and stale cyder, when compared to the joys of the New Gerusalem.

Dear Mary Jones! An please God, when I return I'll bring you a new cap, with a turkey-shell comb, and a pyehouse sermon, that was preached in the Tabernacle. And I pray of all love, you will mind your vriting and your spilling; for, craving your pardon, Molly, it made me suet to disseyffer your last scrabble, which was delivered by the hind at Bath. O voman! voman! if thou hadst but the least consumption of what pleasure we scullers have, when we can cunster the crabbidst buck off hand, and spell the ethnitch vords without lucking at the primmer! . . .

# FRANCES BURNEY (MADAME D'ARBLAY)

## DIARY AND LETTERS

[Madame d'Arblay's Diary and Letters were published in 1842, two years after her death, by her niece Charlotte Barrett. Of the extracts here reproduced, the first dates from the time when the writer had won sudden fame through her first novel, *Evelina* (1778); the third and fourth are from the period of her service as "second Keeper of the Robes" to the Queen (1786-91).]

[DR. JOHNSON]

August 3, 1778.

. . . WHEN we were summoned to dinner, Mrs. Thrale made my father and me sit on each side of her. I said that I hoped I did not take Dr. Johnson's place, — for he had not yet appeared.

"No," answered Mrs. Thrale, "he will sit by you, which I am sure will give him great pleasure."

Soon after we were seated, this great man entered. I have so true a veneration for him that the very sight of him inspires me with delight and reverence, notwithstanding the cruel infirmities to which he is subject; for he has almost perpetual convulsive movements, either of his hands, lips, feet, or knees, and sometimes of all together.

Mrs. Thrale introduced me to him, and he took his place. We had a noble dinner, and a most elegant dessert. Dr. Johnson, in the middle of dinner, asked Mrs. Thrale what was in some little pies that were near him.

"Mutton," answered she, "so I don't ask you to eat any, because I know you despise it."

"No, madam, no," cried he, "I despise nothing that is good of its sort; but I am now too proud to eat it. Sitting by Miss Burney makes me very proud to-day!"

"Miss Burney," said Mrs. Thrale, laughing, "you must take great care of your heart if Dr. Johnson attacks it; for I assure you he is not often successful."

"What's that you say, madam?" cried he. "Are you making mischief between the young lady and me already?"

A little while after he drank Mrs. Thrale's health and mine,



and then added: "'T is a terrible thing that we cannot wish young ladies well without wishing them to become old women!"

"But some people," said Mr. Seward, "are old and young at the same time, for they wear so well that they never look old."

"No, sir, no," cried the doctor, laughing; "that never yet was; you might as well say they are at the same time tall and short. I remember an epitaph to that purpose, which is in —" (I have quite forgot what, and also the name it was made upon, but the rest I recollect exactly: —

"—— lies buried here;  
So early wise, so lasting fair,  
That none, unless her years you told,  
Thought her a child, or thought her old.")

Mrs. Thrale then repeated some lines in French, and Dr. Johnson some more in Latin. An epilogue of Mr. Garrick's to *Bonduca* was then mentioned, and Dr. Johnson said it was a miserable performance, and everybody agreed it was the worst he had ever made.

"And yet," said Mr. Seward, "it has been very much admired; but it is in praise of English valor, and so I suppose the subject made it popular."

"I don't know, sir," said Dr. Johnson, "anything about the subject, for I could not read on till I came to it; I got through half a dozen lines, but I could observe no other subject than eternal dullness. I don't know what is the matter with David; I am afraid he is grown superannuated, for his prologues and epilogues used to be incomparable."

"Nothing is so fatiguing," said Mrs. Thrale, "as the life of a wit. He and Wilkes are the two oldest men of their ages I know, for they have both worn themselves out by being eternally on the rack to give entertainment to others."

"David, madam," said the doctor, "looks much older than he is; for his face has had double the business of any other man's. It is never at rest; when he speaks one minute, he has quite a different countenance to what he assumes the next. I don't believe he ever kept the same look for half an hour together in the whole course of his life; and such an eternal, restless, fatiguing play of the muscles must certainly wear out a man's face before its real time."

"O yes," cried Mrs. Thrale, "we must certainly make some allowance for such wear and tear of a man's face."

The next name that was started was that of Sir John Hawkins, and Mrs. Thrale said: "Why, now, Dr. Johnson, he is another of those whom you suffer nobody to abuse but yourself; Garrick is one, too; for if any other person speaks against him, you browbeat him in a minute!"

"Why, madam," answered he, "they don't know when to abuse him, and when to praise him. I will allow no man to speak ill of David that he does not deserve; and as to Sir John, why, really I believe him to be an honest man at the bottom; but to be sure he is penurious, and he is mean, and it must be owned he has a degree of brutality, and a tendency to savageness, that cannot easily be defended."

We all laughed, as he meant we should, at this curious manner of speaking in his favor; and he then related an anecdote that he said he knew to be true in regard to his meanness. He said that Sir John and he once belonged to the same club, but that as he eat no supper after the first night of his admission, he desired to be excused paying his share.

"And was he excused?"

"O yes; for no man is angry at another for being inferior to himself; we all scorned him, and admitted his plea. For my part, I was such a fool as to pay my share for wine, though I never tasted any. But Sir John was a most *unclubbable* man! And this," continued he, "reminds me of a gentleman and lady with whom I traveled once; I suppose I must call them gentleman and lady, according to form, because they traveled in their own coach and four horses. But at the first inn where we stopped, the lady called for — a pint of ale! and when it came, quarreled with the waiter for not giving full measure. Now Madame Duval<sup>1</sup> could not have done a grosser thing!"

Oh, how everybody laughed! and to be sure I did not glow at all, nor munch fast, nor look on my plate, nor lose any part of my usual composure! But how grateful do I feel to this dear Dr. Johnson, for never naming me and the book as belonging one to the other, and yet making an allusion that showed his thoughts led to it, and, at the same time, that seemed to justify the character as being natural! But indeed, the delicacy

<sup>1</sup> A character in Miss Burney's *Evclina*.

I met with from him, and from all the Thrales, was yet more flattering to me than the praise with which I have heard they have honored my book.

[THE KING]

December 16, 1785.

. . . After dinner, while Mrs. Delany was left alone, as usual, to take a little rest, — for sleep it but seldom proves, — Mr. B. Dewes, his little daughter, Miss Port, and myself, went into the drawing-room. And here, while, to pass the time, I was amusing the little girl with teaching her some Christmas games, in which her father and cousin joined, Mrs. Delany came in. We were all in the middle of the room, and in some confusion! but she had but just come up to us to inquire what was going forwards, and I was disentangling myself from Miss Dewes, to be ready to fly off if any one knocked at the street door, when the door of the drawing-room was again opened, and a large man, in deep mourning, appeared at it, entering and shutting it himself without speaking. A ghost could not more have scared me, when I discovered by its glitter on the black, a star! The general disorder had prevented his being seen, except by myself, who was always on the watch, till Miss P——, turning round, exclaimed, “The king, aunt! the king!”

O mercy! thought I, that I were but out of the room! Which way shall I escape? and how pass him unnoticed? There is but the single door at which he entered, in the room! Every one scampered out of the way, — Miss P——, to stand next the door, Mr. Bernard Dewes to a corner opposite it; his little girl clung to me; and Mrs. Delany advanced to meet his Majesty, who, after quietly looking on till she saw him, approached and inquired how she did. He then spoke to Mr. Bernard, whom he had already met two or three times here.

I had now retreated to the wall, and purposed gliding softly, though speedily, out of the room; but before I had taken a single step, the king, in a loud whisper to Mrs. Delany, said, “Is that Miss Burney?” — and on her answering “Yes, sir,” he bowed, and with a countenance of the most perfect good humor, came close up to me. A most profound reverence on my part arrested the progress of my intended retreat.

“How long have you been come back, Miss Burney?”



“Two days, sir.”

Unluckily he did not hear me, and repeated his question; and whether the second time he heard me or not, I don't know, but he made a little civil inclination of his head, and went back to Mrs. Delany. . . .

A good deal of talk then followed about his own health, and the extreme temperance by which he preserved it. The fault of his constitution, he said, was a tendency to excessive fat, which he kept, however, in order by the most vigorous exercise and the strictest attention to a simple diet. When Mrs. Delany was beginning to praise his forbearance, he stopped her.

“No, no!” he cried. “’T is no virtue; I only prefer eating plain and little, to growing diseased and infirm.”

During this discourse I stood quietly in the place where he had first spoken to me. His quitting me so soon, and conversing freely and easily with Mrs. Delany, proved so delightful a relief to me that I no longer wished myself away; and the moment my first panic from the surprise was over, I diverted myself with a thousand ridiculous notions of my own situation. The Christmas games we had been showing Miss Dewes, it seemed as if we were still performing, as none of us thought it proper to move, though our manner of standing reminded one of “Puss in the corner.” Close to the door was posted Miss P——; opposite her, close to the wainscot, stood Mr. Dewes; at just an equal distance from him, close to a window, stood myself; Mrs. Delany, though seated, was at the opposite side to Miss P——; and his Majesty kept pretty much in the middle of the room. The little girl, who kept close to me, did not break the order, and I could hardly help expecting to be beckoned with a “Puss! puss! puss!” to change places with one of my neighbors. This idea afterwards gave way to another more pompous. It seemed to me we were acting a play. There is something so little like common and real life, in everybody's standing, while talking, in a room full of chairs, and standing, too, so aloof from each other, that I almost thought myself upon a stage, assisting in the representation of a tragedy, — in which the king played his own part of the king; Mrs. Delany that of a venerable confidante; Mr. Dewes, his respectful attendant; Miss P——, a suppliant virgin, waiting encouragement to bring forward some petition; Miss Dewes, a young orphan, intended to

move the royal compassion; and myself, a very solemn, sober, and decent mute.

These fancies, however, only regaled me while I continued a quiet spectator, and without expectation of being called into play. But the king, I have reason to think, meant only to give me time to recover from my first embarrassment; and I feel myself infinitely obliged to his good breeding and consideration, which perfectly answered, for before he returned to me I was entirely recruited.

To go back to my narration. When the discourse upon health and strength was over, the king went up to the table, and looked at a book of prints from Claude Lorraine, which had been brought down for Miss Dewes; but Mrs. Delany, by mistake, told him they were for me. He turned over a leaf or two, and then said, — "Pray, does Miss Burney draw, too?" The *too* was pronounced very civilly.

"I believe not, sir," answered Mrs. Delany. "At least she does not tell."

"Oh!" cried he, laughing, "that's nothing! She is not apt to tell; she never does tell, you know! Her father told me that himself. He told me the whole history of her *Evelina*. And I shall never forget his face when he spoke of his feelings at first taking up the book! — he looked quite frightened, just as if he was doing it that moment! I never can forget his face while I live!" Then, coming up close to me, he said, "But what? what? How was it?"

"Sir," cried I, not well understanding him.

"How came you — how happened it? What? what?"

"That was only, sir, only because —"

I hesitated most abominably, not knowing how to tell him a long story, and growing terribly confused at these questions. . . . The *What!* was then repeated with so earnest a look that, forced to say something, I stammeringly answered, —

"I thought, sir, — it would look very well in print!"

I do really flatter myself this is the silliest speech I ever made! I am quite provoked with myself for it; but a fear of laughing made me eager to utter anything, and by no means conscious, till I had spoken, of what I was saying.

. . . The sermon of the day before was then talked over. Mrs. Delany had not heard it, and the king said it was no great

loss. He asked me what I had thought of it, and we agreed perfectly, to the no great exaltation of poor Dr. L —.

Some time afterwards, the king said he found by the newspapers that Mrs. Clive was dead. Do you read the newspapers? thought I. Oh, king! you must then have the most unvexing temper in the world not to run wild.

This led on to more players. He was sorry, he said, for Henderson, and the more as Mrs. Siddons wished to have him play at the same house with herself. Then Mrs. Siddons took her turn, and with the warmest praise.

"I am an enthusiast for her," cried the king, "quite an enthusiast. I think there was never any player in my time so excellent — not Garrick himself; I own it!" Then, coming close to me, who was silent, he said, "What? what?" — meaning, what say you? But I still said nothing. I could not concur where I thought so differently, and to enter into an argument was quite impossible; for every little thing I said the king listened to with an eagerness that made me always ashamed of its insignificancy. And, indeed, but for that I should have talked to him with much greater fluency, as well as ease.

From players he went to plays, and complained of the great want of good modern comedies, and of the extreme immorality of most of the old ones.

"And they pretend," cried he, "to mend them; but it is not possible. Do you think it is? — what?"

"No, sir, not often, I believe. The fault commonly lies in the very foundation."

"Yes, or they might mend the mere speeches; but the characters are all bad from the beginning to the end."

Then he specified several; but I had read none of them, and consequently could say nothing about the matter, till at last he came to Shakespeare.

"Was there ever," cried he, "such stuff as great part of Shakespeare? Only one must not say so! But what think you? What? Is there not sad stuff? What? what?"

"Yes, indeed, I think so, sir, though mixed with such excellences that —"

"Oh!" cried he, laughing good-humoredly, "I know it is not to be said! but it's true. Only it's Shakespeare, and nobody dare abuse him." . . .



## [THE TRIAL OF WARREN HASTINGS]

February 13, 1788.

In the middle was placed a large table, and at the head of it the seat for the Chancellor, and round it seats for the judges, the Masters in Chancery, the clerks, and all who belonged to the law; the upper end, and the right side of the room, was allotted to the peers in their robes; the left side to the bishops and archbishops. Immediately below the Great Chamberlain's box was the place allotted for the prisoner. On his right side was a box for his own counsel, on his left the box for the managers, or committee, for the prosecution; and these three most important of all the divisions in the Hall were all directly adjoining to where I was seated. . . .

The business did not begin till near twelve o'clock. The opening to the whole then took place, by the entrance of the managers of the prosecution; all the company were already long in their boxes or galleries. I shuddered, and drew involuntarily back, when, as the doors were flung open, I saw Mr. Burke, as Head of the Committee, make his solemn entry. He held a scroll in his hand, and walked alone, his brow knit with corroding care and deep laboring thought, — a brow how different to that which had proved so alluring to my warmest admiration when first I met him! so highly as he had been my favorite, so captivating as I had found his manners and conversation in our first acquaintance, and so much as I owed to his zeal and kindness to me and my affairs in its progress! How did I grieve to behold him now the cruel prosecutor (such to me he appeared) of an injured and innocent man!

Mr. Fox followed next, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Wyndham, Messrs. Anstruther, Grey, Adam, Michael Angelo Taylor, Pelham, Colonel North, Mr. Frederick Montagu, Sir Gilbert Elliot, General Burgoyne, Dudley Long, etc. They were all named over to me by Lady Claremont, or I should not have recollected even those of my acquaintance, from the shortness of my sight.

When the committee box was filled, the House of Commons at large took their seats on their green benches, which stretched, as I have said, along the whole left side of the Hall. . . . Then began the procession, the clerks entering first, then the lawyers

according to their rank, and the peers, bishops, and officers, all in their coronation robes; concluding with the Princes of the Blood, — Prince William, son to the Duke of Gloucester, coming first, then the Dukes of Cumberland, Gloucester, and York, then the Prince of Wales; and the whole ending by the Chancellor, with his train borne. They then all took their seats.

A sergeant-at-arms arose, and commanded silence in the court, on pain of imprisonment. Then some other officer, in a loud voice, called out, as well as I can recollect, words to this purpose: "Warren Hastings, Esquire, come forth! Answer to the charges brought against you; save your bail, or forfeit your recognizance!" Indeed I trembled at these words, and hardly could keep my place when I found Mr. Hastings was being brought to the bar. He came forth from some place immediately under the Great Chamberlain's box, and was preceded by Sir Francis Molyneux, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod; and at each side of him walked his bails, Messrs. Sullivan and Sumner. The moment he came in sight, which was not for full ten minutes after his awful summons, he made a low bow to the Chancellor and court facing him. I saw not his face, as he was directly under me. He moved on slowly, and, I think, supported between his two bails, to the opening of his own box; there, lower still, he bowed again; and then, advancing to the bar, he leant his hands upon it, and dropped on his knees; but a voice in the same moment proclaiming he had leave to rise, he stood up almost instantaneously, and a third time profoundly bowed to the court. . . .

The crier, I think it was, made, in a loud and hollow voice, a public proclamation, "that Warren Hastings, Esquire, late Governor-General of Bengal, was now on his trial for high crimes and misdemeanors, with which he was charged by the Commons of Great Britain; and that all persons whatsoever who had aught to allege against him were now to stand forth." . . .

The interest of this trial was so much upon my mind that I have not kept even a memorandum of what passed from the 13th of February to the day when I went again to Westminster Hall. . . . The prisoner was brought in, and Mr. Burke began his speech. It was the second day of his harangue; the first I had not been able to attend.

All I had heard of his eloquence, and all I had conceived of his great abilities, was more than answered by his performance. Nervous, clear, and striking was almost all that he uttered; the main business, indeed, of his coming forth was frequently neglected, and not seldom wholly lost; but his excursions were so fanciful, so entertaining, and so ingenious, that no miscellaneous hearer, like myself, could blame them. It is true he was unequal, but his inequality produced an effect which, in so long a speech, was perhaps preferable to greater consistency, since, though it lost attention in its falling off, it recovered it with additional energy by some ascent unexpected and wonderful. When he narrated, he was easy, flowing, and natural; when he declaimed, energetic, warm, and brilliant. The sentiments he interspersed were as nobly conceived as they were highly colored; his satire had a poignancy of wit that made it as entertaining as it was penetrating. His allusions and quotations, as far as they were English and within my reach, were apt and ingenious; and the wild and sudden flights of his fancy, bursting forth from his creative imagination in language fluent, forcible, and varied, had a charm for my ear and my attention wholly new and perfectly irresistible.

Were talents such as these exercised in the service of truth, unbiased by party and prejudice, how could we sufficiently applaud their exalted possessor! But though frequently he made me tremble by his strong and horrible representations, his own violence recovered me, by stigmatizing his assertions with personal ill-will and designing illiberality. Yet at times I confess, with all that I felt, wished, and thought concerning Mr. Hastings, the whirlwind of his eloquence nearly drew me into its vortex. . . .

[BOSWELL]

October, 1790.

The beautiful chapel of St. George, repaired and finished by the best artists at an immense expense, which was now opened after a very long shutting up for its preparations, brought innumerable strangers to Windsor, and, among others, Mr. Boswell. This I heard, in my way to the chapel, from Mr. Turbulent,<sup>1</sup> who overtook me, and mentioned having met Mr. Boswell at the Bishop of Carlisle's the evening before. He proposed

<sup>1</sup> A pseudonym for La Guiffardière, French reader to the Queen.



bringing him to call upon me; but this I declined, certain how little satisfaction would be given here by the entrance of a man so famous for compiling anecdotes. But yet I really wished to see him again, for old acquaintance' sake,<sup>1</sup> and unavoidable

<sup>1</sup> [The record of Miss Burney's first meeting with Boswell is not found in the *Diary*, but in the *Memoirs* of her father, written in her old age and published 1832. Though not strictly, therefore, a part of eighteenth-century literature, it is too pertinent not to be reproduced:]

As Mr. Boswell was at Streatham only upon a morning visit, a collation was ordered to which all were assembled. Mr. Boswell was preparing to take a seat that he seemed, by prescription, to consider as his own, next to Dr. Johnson; but Mr. Seward, who was present, waved his hand for Mr. Boswell to move farther on, saying with a smile, "Mr. Boswell, that seat is Miss Burney's."

He stared, amazed. The asserted claimant was new and unknown to him, and he appeared by no means pleased to resign his prior rights. But after looking round for a minute or two, with an important air of demanding the meaning of the innovation, and receiving no satisfaction, he reluctantly, almost resentfully, got another chair, and placed it at the back of the shoulder of Dr. Johnson; while this new and unheard-of rival quietly seated herself as if not hearing what was passing, for she shrank from the explanation that she feared might ensue, as she saw a smile stealing over every countenance, that of Dr. Johnson himself not excepted, at the discomfiture and surprise of Mr. Boswell.

Mr. Boswell, however, was so situated as not to remark it in the Doctor; and of every one else, when in that presence, he was unobservant if not contemptuous. In truth, when he met Dr. Johnson, he commonly forbore even answering anything that went forward, lest he should miss the smallest sound from that voice to which he paid such exclusive, though merited, homage. But the moment that voice burst forth, the attention which it excited in Mr. Boswell amounted almost to pain. His eyes goggled with eagerness; he leant his ear almost on the shoulder of the Doctor, and his mouth dropped open to catch every syllable that might be uttered; nay, he seemed not only to dread losing a word, but to be anxious not to miss a breathing, as if hoping from it, latently or mystically, some information.

But when, in a few minutes, Dr. Johnson, whose eye did not follow him, and who had concluded him to be at the other end of the table, said something gayly and good-humorously, by the appellation of *Bozzy*, and discovered, by the sound of the reply, that *Bozzy* had planted himself, as closely as he could, behind and between the elbows of the new usurper and his own, the Doctor turned angrily round upon him, and, clapping his hand rather loudly upon his knee, said, in a tone of displeasure: "What do you do there, sir? Go to the table, sir!"

Mr. Boswell instantly, and with an air of affright, obeyed; and there was something so unusual in such humble submission to so imperious a command, that another smile gleamed its way across every mouth, except that of the Doctor and of Mr. Boswell, who now, very unwillingly, took a distant seat.

But, ever restless when not at the side of Dr. Johnson, he presently recollected something that he wished to exhibit; and, hastily rising, was running away in its search, when the Doctor, calling after him, authoritatively said, "What are you thinking of, sir? Why do you get up before the cloth is removed? Come back to your place, sir!"

Again, and with equal obsequiousness, Mr. Boswell did as he was bid; when the Doctor, pursing his lips not to betray rising risibility, muttered half to himself: "Running about in the middle of meals! One would take you for a Branghton!" [The name of a vulgar family in Miss Burney's *Evelina*.]

"A Branghton, sir?" repeated Mr. Boswell, with earnestness. "What is a Branghton, sir?"

"Where have you lived, sir?" cried the Doctor, laughing, "and what company have you kept, not to know that?"

Mr. Boswell now, doubly curious, yet always apprehensive of falling into some disgrace with Dr. Johnson, said, in a low tone, which he knew the Doctor could not hear, to Mrs. Thrale: "Pray, ma'am, what's a Branghton? Do me the favor to tell me! Is it some animal hereabouts?"

amusement from his oddity and good-humor, as well as respect for the object of his constant admiration, my revered Dr. Johnson. I therefore told Mr. Turbulent I should be extremely glad to speak with him after the service was over.

Accordingly, at the gate of the choir Mr. Turbulent brought him to me. We saluted with mutual glee. His comic-serious face and manner have lost nothing of their wonted singularity, nor yet have his mind and language, as you will soon confess. . . . I asked him about Mr. Burke's book. "Oh," cried he, "it will come out next week; 't is the first book in the world, except my own, and that's coming out also very soon; only I want your help."

"My help?"

"Yes, madam, you must give me some of your choice little notes of the Doctor's; we have seen him long enough upon stilts; I want to show him in a new light. Grave Sam, and great Sam, and solemn Sam, and learned Sam — all these he has appeared over and over. Now I want to entwine a wreath of the graces across his brow; I want to show him as gay Sam, agreeable Sam, pleasant Sam; so you must help me with some of his beautiful billets to yourself."

I evaded this by declaring I had not any stores at hand. He proposed a thousand curious expedients to get at them, but I was invincible. . . . He then told me his *Life of Dr. Johnson* was nearly printed, and took a proof-sheet out of his pocket to show me, with crowds passing and repassing, knowing me well, and staring well at him; for we were now at the iron rails of the Queen's Lodge. I stopped; I could not ask him in. I saw he expected it, and was reduced to apologize, and tell him I must attend the Queen immediately. . . . Finding he had no chance for entering, he stopped me again at the gate, and said he would read me a part of his work. There was no refusing this; and he began, with a letter of Dr. Johnson to himself. He read it in strong imitation of the Doctor's manner, — very well, and not

Mrs. Thrale only heartily laughed, but without answering, as she saw one of her guests uneasily fearful of an explanation. But Mr. Seward cried: "I'll tell you, Boswell, I'll tell you, if you will walk with me into the paddock; only let us wait till the table is cleared, or I shall be taken for a Branghton too!"

They soon went off together, and Mr. Boswell, no doubt, was fully informed of the road that had led to the usurpation by which he had thus been annoyed. But the Branghton fabricator took care to mount to her chamber ere they returned, and did not come down till Mr. Boswell was gone.

caricature. But Mrs. Schwellenberg was at her window, a crowd was gathering to stand round the rails, and the king and queen and royal family now approached from the Terrace. I made a rather quick apology, and, with a step as quick as my now weakened limbs have left in my power, I hurried to my apartment.

June 5, 1791.

[Mr. Turbulent] had been reading, like all the rest of the world, Boswell's *Life of Dr. Johnson*, and the preference there expressed of Mrs. Lennox to all other females had filled him with astonishment, as he had never even heard her name. These occasional sallies of Dr. Johnson, uttered from local causes and circumstances, but all retailed verbatim by Mr. Boswell, are filling all sorts of readers with amaze, except the small party to whom Dr. Johnson was known, and who, by acquaintance with the power of the moment over his unguarded conversation, know how little of his solid opinion was to be gathered from his accidental assertions.

. . . I regretted not having the strength to read this work to her Majesty myself. It was an honor I should else have certainly received; for so much wanted clearing! so little was understood! However, the Queen frequently condescended to read over passages and anecdotes which perplexed or offended her, and there were none I had not a fair power to soften or to justify. Dear and excellent Dr. Johnson! I have never forgot nor neglected his injunction given me when he was ill, — to stand by him and support him, and not hear him abused when he was no more, and could not defend himself! But little — little did I think it would ever fall to my lot to vindicate him to his king and queen.

[BURKE]

June 18, 1792.

. . . At length Mr. Burke appeared, accompanied by Mr. Elliot. He shook hands with my father as soon as he had paid his devoirs to Mrs. Crewe, but he returned my curtesy with so distant a bow that I concluded myself quite lost with him, from my evident solicitude in poor Mr. Hastings's cause. I could not wish that less obvious, thinking as I think of it; but I felt infinitely grieved to lose the favor of a man whom, in all other articles, I so much venerate, and whom indeed I esteem and admire



as the very first man of true genius now living in this country. . . . The moment I was named, to my great joy I found Mr. Burke had not recollected me. He is more near-sighted, considerably, than myself.

"Miss Burney!" he now exclaimed, coming forward, and quite kindly taking my hand, "I did not see you." And then he spoke very sweet words of the meeting, and of my looking far better than "while I was a courtier," and of how he rejoiced to see that I so little suited that station. . . . After this my father joined us, and politics took the lead. He spoke then with an eagerness and a vehemence that instantly banished the graces, though it redoubled the energies, of his discourse.

"The French Revolution," he said, "which began by authorizing and legalizing injustice, and which by rapid steps had proceeded to every species of despotism except owning a despot, was now menacing all the universe and all mankind with the most violent concussion of principle and order." My father heartily joined, and I tacitly assented to his doctrines, though I feared not with his fears.

One speech I must repeat, for it is explanatory of his conduct, and nobly explanatory. When he had expatiated upon the present dangers, even to English liberty and property, from the contagion of havoc and novelty, he earnestly exclaimed, "This it is that has made *me* an abettor and supporter of kings! Kings are necessary, and if we would preserve peace and prosperity, we must preserve *them*. We must all put our shoulders to the work! Ay, and stoutly, too!"

This subject lasted till dinner. At dinner Mr. Burke sat next Mrs. Crewe, and I had the happiness to be seated next Mr. Burke, and my other neighbor was his amiable son. The dinner, and the dessert when the servants were removed, were delightful. How I wish my dear Susanna and Fredy could meet this wonderful man when he is easy, happy, and with people he cordially likes! But politics, even on his own side, must always be excluded; his irritability is so terrible on that theme that it gives immediately to his face the expression of a man who is going to defend himself from murderers. . . .

# WILLIAM COWPER

## LETTERS

[Cowper's Letters were first published, very incompletely, in connection with his Life by Hayley. The collection has been increased at various times, until the complete edition by Thomas Wright in 1904. Practically all the letters were written from the poet's quiet home at Olney; the larger number are addressed to Rev. John Newton, the evangelical clergyman with whom Cowper wrote the *Olney Hymns*, and Rev. William Unwin, son of the Mrs. Unwin with whom he made his home. Some of the most agreeable, again, were addressed to his cousin Lady Hesketh.]

TO MRS. COWPER

October 20, 1766.

MY DEAR COUSIN:

. . . I am obliged to you for the interest you take in my welfare, and for your inquiring so particularly after the manner in which my time passes here. As to amusements, I mean what the world calls such, we have none; the place indeed swarms with them, and cards and dancing are the professed business of almost all the *gentle* inhabitants of Huntingdon. We refuse to take part in them, or to be accessories to this way of murdering our time, and by so doing have acquired the name of Methodists. Having told you how we do not spend our time, I will next say how we do. We breakfast commonly between eight and nine; till eleven, we read either the Scripture or the sermons of some faithful preacher of those holy mysteries; at eleven we attend divine service, which is performed here twice every day; and from twelve to three we separate and amuse ourselves as we please. During that interval I either read in my own apartment, or walk, or ride, or work in the garden. We seldom sit an hour after dinner, but if the weather permits adjourn to the garden, where with Mrs. Unwin and her son I have generally the pleasure of religious conversation till tea-time. If it rains, or is too windy for walking, we either converse within doors, or sing some hymns of Martin's collection, and by the help of Mrs. Unwin's harpsichord make up a tolerable concert, in which our hearts, I hope, are the best and most

musical performers. After tea we sally forth to walk in good earnest. Mrs. Unwin is a good walker, and we have generally traveled about four miles before we see home again. When the days are short, we make this excursion in the former part of the day, between church-time and dinner. At night we read and converse, as before, till supper, and commonly finish the evening either with hymns or a sermon; and last of all the family are called to prayers. I need not tell *you* that such a life as this is consistent with the utmost cheerfulness; accordingly we are all happy, and dwell together in unity as brethren. Mrs. Unwin has almost a maternal affection for me, and I have something very like a filial one for her; and her son and I are brothers. Blessed be the God of our salvation for such companions, and for such a life; above all, for a heart to like it. . . .

TO REV. WILLIAM UNWIN

October 31, 1779.

. . . I have been well entertained with Johnson's biographies, for which I thank you; with one exception, and that a swingeing one, I think he has acquitted himself with his usual good sense and sufficiency. His treatment of Milton is unmerciful to the last degree.<sup>1</sup> A pensioner is not likely to spare a republican; and the Doctor, in order, I suppose, to convince his royal patron of the sincerity of his monarchical principles, has belabored that great poet's character with the most industrious cruelty. As a man, he has hardly left him the shadow of one good quality. Churlishness in his private life, and a rancorous hatred of everything royal in his public, are the two colors with which he has smeared all the canvas. If he had any virtues, they are not to be found in the Doctor's picture of him; and it is well for Milton that some sourness in his temper is the only vice with which his memory has been charged; it is evident enough that, if his biographer could have discovered more, he would not have spared him. As a poet, he has treated him with severity enough, and has plucked one or two of the most beautiful feathers out of his Muse's wing, and trampled them under his great foot. He has passed sentence of condemnation upon *Lycidas*, and has taken occasion from that charming poem to expose to ridicule (what is indeed ridiculous enough) the child-

<sup>1</sup> See page 387, above.



ish prattlement of pastoral compositions, as if *Lycidas* was the prototype and pattern of them all. The liveliness of the description, the sweetness of the numbers, the classical spirit of antiquity that prevails in it, go for nothing. I am convinced, by the way, that he has no ear for poetical numbers, or that it was stopped by prejudice against the harmony of Milton's. Was there ever anything so delightful as the music of the *Paradise Lost*? It is like that of a fine organ; has the fullest and deepest tones of majesty, with all the softness and elegance of the Dorian flute; variety without end, and never equaled, unless perhaps by Virgil. Yet the Doctor has little or nothing to say upon this copious theme, but talks something about the unfitness of the English language for blank verse, and how apt it is, in the mouth of some readers, to degenerate into declamation. Oh! I could thresh his old jacket, till I made his pension jingle in his pocket! . . .

January 5, 1782.

. . . In the last *Review*, I mean in the last but one, I saw Johnson's critique upon Prior and Pope. I am bound to acquiesce in his opinion of the latter, because it has always been my own. I could never agree with those who preferred him to Dryden; nor with others (I have known such, and persons of taste and discernment too) who could not allow him to be a poet at all. He was certainly a mechanical maker of verses, and in every line he ever wrote we see indubitable marks of the most indefatigable industry and labor. Writers who find it necessary to make such strenuous and painful exertions are generally as phlegmatic as they are correct; but Pope was, in this respect, exempted from the common lot of authors of that class. With the unwearied application of a plodding Flemish painter, who draws a shrimp with the most minute exactness, he had all the genius of one of the first masters. Never, I believe, were such talents and such drudgery united. But I admire Dryden most, who has succeeded by mere dint of genius, and in spite of a laziness and carelessness almost peculiar to himself. His faults are numberless, but so are his beauties. His faults are those of a great man, and his beauties are such (at least sometimes) as Pope, with all his touching and retouching, could never equal. So far, therefore, I have no quarrel with Johnson. But I cannot subscribe to what he says

of Prior. In the first place, though my memory may fail me, I do not recollect that he takes any notice of his *Solomon*, — in my mind the best poem, whether we consider the subject of it or the execution, that he ever wrote. In the next place, he condemns him for introducing Venus and Cupid into his love-verses, and concludes it impossible his passion could be sincere, because when he would express it he has recourse to fables. But when Prior wrote, those deities were not so obsolete as now. His contemporary writers, and some that succeeded him, did not think them beneath their notice. . . . I admire Johnson as a man of great erudition and sense; but when he sets himself up for a judge of writers upon the subject of love, a passion which I suppose he never felt in his life, he might as well think himself qualified to pronounce upon a treatise on horsemanship, or the art of fortification. . . .

TO REV. JOHN NEWTON

July 27, 1783.

MY DEAR FRIEND: You cannot have more pleasure in receiving a letter from me than I should find in writing it, were it not almost impossible in such a place to find a subject.

I live in a world abounding with incidents, upon which many grave and perhaps some profitable reflections might be made; but those incidents never reaching my unfortunate ears, both the entertaining narrative and the reflection it might suggest are to me annihilated and lost. I look back to the past week, and say, what did it produce? I ask the same question of the week preceding, and duly receive the same answer from both, — nothing! A situation like this, in which I am as unknown to the world as I am ignorant of all that passes in it, in which I have nothing to do but to think, would exactly suit me, were my subjects of meditation as agreeable as my leisure is uninterrupted. My passion for retirement is not at all abated, after so many years spent in the most sequestered state, but rather increased; — a circumstance I should esteem wonderful to a degree not to be accounted for, considering the condition of my mind, did I not know that we think as we are made to think, and of course approve and prefer as Providence, who appoints the bounds of our habitation, chooses for us. Thus am I both free and a prisoner at the same time. The world is before me; I am

not shut up in the Bastille; there are no moats about my castle, no locks upon my gates of which I have not the key; but an invisible, uncontrollable agency, a local attachment, an inclination more forcible than I ever felt, even to the place of my birth, serves me for prison walls, and for bounds which I cannot pass. . . . So it is, and it is so because here is to be my abode, and because such is the appointment of Him that placed me in it. . . .

TO REV. WILLIAM UNWIN

September 29, 1783.

. . . By the way, what is your opinion of these air balloons? I am quite charmed with the discovery. Is it not possible — do you suppose — to convey such a quantity of inflammable air into the stomach and abdomen, that the philosopher, no longer gravitating to a centre, shall ascend by his own comparative levity, and never stop till he has reached the medium exactly *in equilibrio* with himself? May he not, by the help of a paste-board rudder attached to his posteriors, steer himself in that pure element with ease; and again, by a slow and gradual discharge of his aerial contents, recover his former tendency to the earth, and descend without the smallest danger or inconvenience? These things are worth inquiry, and I dare say they will be inquired after as they deserve. The *pennæ non homini datæ*<sup>1</sup> are likely to be less regretted than they were; and perhaps a flight of academicians and a covey of fine ladies may be no uncommon spectacle in the next generation. A letter which appeared in the public prints last week convinces me that the learned are not without hopes of some such improvement upon this discovery. The author is a sensible and ingenious man, and, under a reasonable apprehension that the ignorant may feel themselves inclined to laugh upon a subject that affects himself with the utmost seriousness, with much good manners and management bespeaks their patience, suggesting many good consequences that may result from a course of experiments upon this machine; and amongst others, that it may be of use in ascertaining the shape of continents and islands, and the face of wide-extended and far distant countries, — an end not to be hoped for, unless by these means of extraordinary elevation the human prospect may be immensely enlarged, and the

<sup>1</sup> "Wings denied to men."



philosopher, exalted to the skies, attain a view of the whole hemisphere at once. But whether he is to ascend by the mere inflation of his person, as hinted above, or whether in a sort of bandbox, supported upon balloons, is not yet apparent, nor — I suppose — even in his own idea perfectly decided.

TO REV. JOHN NEWTON

November 30, 1783.

. . . Let our station be as retired as it may, there is no want of playthings and avocations, nor much need to seek them, in this world of ours. Business, or what presents itself to us under that imposing character, will find us out even in the stillest retreat, and plead its importance, however trivial in reality, as a just demand upon our attention. It is wonderful how, by means of such real or seeming necessities, my time is stolen away. I have just time to observe that time is short, and by the time I have made the observation, time is gone. I have wondered in former days at the patience of the antediluvian world, — that they could endure a life almost millenary, with so little variety as seems to have fallen to their share. It is probable that they had much fewer employments than we. Their affairs lay in a narrower compass; their libraries were indifferently furnished; philosophical researches were carried on with much less industry and acuteness of penetration; and fiddles, perhaps, were not even invented. How then could seven or eight hundred years of life be supportable? I have asked this question formerly, and been at a loss to resolve it; but I think I can answer it now. I will suppose myself born a thousand years before Noah was born or thought of. I rise with the sun; I worship; I prepare my breakfast; I swallow a bucket of goat's milk, and a dozen good sizable cakes. I fasten a new string to my bow, and my youngest boy, a lad of about thirty years of age, having played with my arrows till he has stripped off all the feathers, I find myself obliged to repair them. The morning is thus spent in preparing for the chase, and it is become necessary that I should dine. I dig up my roots; I wash them; I boil them; I find them not done enough; I boil them again; my wife is angry; we dispute; we settle the point; but in the mean time the fire goes out, and must be kindled again. All this is very amusing. I hunt; I bring home the prey; with the skin of it I

mend an old coat, or I make a new one. By this time the day is far spent; I feel myself fatigued, and retire to rest. Thus, what with tilling the ground and eating the fruit of it, hunting and walking and running, and mending old clothes, and sleeping and rising again, I can suppose an inhabitant of the primæval world so much occupied as to sigh over the shortness of life, and to find at the end of many centuries that they had all slipped through his fingers, and were passed away like a shadow.

September 18, 1784.

. . . My greenhouse is never so pleasant as when we are just upon the point of being turned out of it. . . . I sit with all the windows and the door wide open, and am regaled with the scent of every flower in a garden as full of flowers as I have known how to make it. We keep no bees, but if I lived in a hive I should hardly hear more of their music. All the bees in the neighborhood resort to a bed of mignonette opposite to the window, and pay me for the honey they get out of it by a hum which, though rather monotonous, is as agreeable to my ear as the whistling of my linnets. All the sounds that nature utters are delightful, — at least in this country. I should not, perhaps, find the roaring of lions in Africa, or of bears in Russia, very pleasing; but I know no beast in England whose voice I do not account musical, save and except always the braying of an ass. The notes of all our birds and fowls please me, without one exception. I should not, indeed, think of keeping a goose in a cage, that I might hang him up in the parlor for the sake of his melody; but a goose upon a common, or in a farm-yard, is no bad performer. And as to insects, if the black beetle, and beetles indeed of all hues, will keep out of my way, I have no objection to any of the rest; on the contrary, in whatever key they sing, from the gnat's fine treble to the bass of the humble bee, I admire them all. Seriously, however, it strikes me as a very observable instance of providential kindness to man, that such an exact accord has been contrived between his ear and the sounds with which — at least in a rural situation — it is almost every moment visited. All the world is sensible of the uncomfortable effect that certain sounds have upon the nerves, and consequently upon the spirits; and if a sinful world had been filled with such as would have curdled the blood, and have

made the sense of hearing a perpetual inconvenience, I do not know that we should have had a right to complain. But now the fields, the woods, the gardens, have each their concert, and the ear of man is forever regaled by creatures who seem only to please themselves. Even the ears that are deaf to the Gospel are continually entertained, though without knowing it, by sounds for which they are solely indebted to its Author. There is somewhere in infinite space a world that does not roll within the precincts of mercy, and as it is reasonable, and even scriptural, to suppose that there is music in heaven, in those dismal regions perhaps the reverse of it is found,—tones so dismal as to make woe itself more insupportable, and to acuminate even despair. . . .

## TO LADY HESKETH

December 15, 1785.

. . . It would ill become me avowedly to point out the faults of Pope in a preface, and would be as impolitic as indecent. But to you, my dear, I can utter my mind freely. Let me premise, however, that you answered the gentleman's inquiry whether in blank verse or not, to a marvel. It is even so; and let some critics say what they will, I aver it, and will forever aver it, that to give a just representation of Homer in rhyme is a natural impossibility. Now for Pope himself: I will allow his whole merit. He has written a great deal of very musical and sweet verse in his translation of Homer, but his verse is not universally such; on the contrary, it is often lame, feeble, and flat. He has, besides, occasionally a felicity of expression peculiar to himself; but it is a felicity purely modern, and has nothing to do with Homer. Except the Bible, there never was in the world a book so remarkable for that species of the sublime that owes its very existence to simplicity, as the works of Homer. He is always nervous, plain, natural. I refer you to your own knowledge of his copyist for a decision upon Pope's merits in these particulars. The garden in all the gayety of June is less flowery than his translation. Metaphors of which Homer never dreamt, which he did not seek, and which probably he would have disdained if he had found, follow each other in quick succession like the sliding pictures in a show box. Homer is, on occasions that call for such a style, the easiest and most familiar of writers; a circumstance that escaped Pope



entirely, who takes most religious care that he shall everywhere strut in buckram. . . . In short, my dear, there is hardly anything in the world so unlike another, as Pope's version of Homer to the original. Give me a great corking-pin, that I may stick your faith upon my sleeve. There—it is done! Now assure yourself, upon the credit of a man who made Homer much his study in his youth, and who is perhaps better acquainted with Pope's translation of him than almost any man, having twenty-five years ago compared them with each other line by line throughout, — upon the credit of a man, too, who would not for the world deceive you in the smallest matter, — that Pope never entered into the spirit of Homer, that he never translated him, — I had almost said, did not understand him; many passages it is literally true he did not. Why, when he first entered on his task, did he (as he did, by his own confession) forever dream that he was wandering in unknown ways, that he was lost upon heaths and forests, and awoke in terror? I will tell you, my dear; his dreams were emblems of his waking experience; and I am mistaken if I could not go near to prove that at his first setting out he knew very little of Greek, and was never an adept in it, to the last. . . .

## THE MONTHLY REVIEW

DECEMBER, 1786

[This journal, the earliest of English critical reviews, was founded by the bookseller Ralph Griffiths, who conducted it till his death, in 1803. It was Whig and nonconformist in attitude; see Dr. Johnson's remark comparing it and its Tory rival (founded 1756) *The Critical Review*, quoted by Boswell, page 650, below. The present extract is reproduced both for its interest as exemplifying the attitude of the *Monthly* toward a new poet, and its connection with the earliest volume of Burns's poems.]

*Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect.* By Robert Burns. 8vo. Kilmarnock. 1786.

*Poeta nascitur non fit* is an old maxim, the truth of which has been generally admitted; and although it be certain that in modern times many verses are manufactured from the brain of their authors with as much labor as the iron is drawn into form under the hammer of the smith, and require to be afterwards smoothed by the file with as much care as the burnishers of Sheffield employ to give the last finish to their wares, yet after all these verses, though ever so smooth, are nothing but *verses*, and have no genuine title to the name of Poems. The humble bard whose work now demands our attention cannot claim a place among these polished versifiers. His simple strains, artless and unadorned, seem to flow without effort from the native feelings of the heart. They are always nervous, sometimes inelegant, often natural, simple, and sublime. The objects that have obtained the attention of the author are humble; for he himself, born in a low station, and following a laborious employment, has had no opportunity of observing scenes in the higher walks of life. Yet his verses are sometimes struck off with a delicacy and artless simplicity that charms like the bewitching though irregular touches of a Shakespeare.

We much regret that these poems are written in some measure in an unknown tongue, which must deprive most of our readers of the pleasure they would otherwise naturally create, being composed in the Scottish dialect, which contains many words that are altogether unknown to an English reader. Be-

side, they abound with allusions to the modes of life, opinions, and ideas of the people in a remote corner of the country, which would render many passages obscure, and consequently uninteresting, to those who perceive not the forcible accuracy of the picture of the objects to which they allude. This work, therefore, can only be fully relished by the natives of the part of the country where it was produced; but by such of them as have a taste sufficiently refined to be able to relish the beauties of nature, it cannot fail to be highly prized.

By what we can collect from the poems themselves, and the short preface to them, the author seems to be struggling with poverty, though cheerfully supporting the fatigues of a laborious employment. He thus speaks of himself in one of the poems: —

The star that rules my luckless lot  
Has fated me the russet coat,  
And damn'd my fortune to the groat;  
But, in requite,  
Has blessed me with a random shot  
Of country wit. . . .

“None of the following works” (we are told in the Preface) “were ever composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigues of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind — these were his motives for courting the Muses, and in these he found poetry its own reward.”

These poems are chiefly in the comic strain. Some are of the descriptive cast, particularly *Hallow-e'en*, which contains a lively picture of the magical tricks that still are practiced in the country at that season. It is a valuable relic which, like Virgil's eighth Eclogue, will preserve the memory of these simple incantations long after they would otherwise have been lost. It is very properly accompanied with notes explaining the circumstances to which the poem alludes. Sometimes the poems are in the elegiac strain, among which class the reader will find much of nature in the lines to a Mouse, on turning up her nest with the plough, in November, 1785, and those to a Moun-



tain Daisy, on turning one down with the plough, in April, 1786. . . .

The modern ear will be somewhat disgusted with the measure of many of these pieces, which is faithfully copied from that which was most in fashion among the ancient Scottish bards, but hath been — we think with good reason — laid aside by later poets. The versification is, in general, easy, and it seems to have been a matter of indifference to our author in what measure he wrote. But if ever he should think of offering anything more to the public, we are of opinion his performances would be more highly valued were they written in measures less antiquated.

The few songs, odes, dirges, etc., in this collection are very poor in comparison of the other pieces. The author's mind is not sufficiently stored with brilliant ideas to succeed in that line.

In justice to the reader, however, as well as the author, we must observe that this collection may be compared to a heap of wheat carelessly winnowed. Some grain of a most excellent quality is mixed with a little chaff and half-ripened corn. How many splendid volumes of poems come under our review, in which, though the mere chaff be carefully separated, not a single atom of perfect grain can be found, all being light and insipid! We never reckon our task fatiguing when we can find, even among a great heap, a single pearl of price; but how pitiable is our lot when we must toil and toil, and can find nothing but tiresome uniformity, with neither fault to rouse nor beauty to animate the jaded spirits!

## EDWARD GIBBON

### THE HISTORY OF THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

1776-88

[This work, the chief history of the century, whether regarded as a work of learning or of literature, began to appear in 1776, and the sixth and last volume was published on the author's fifty-first birthday, April 27, 1788. For his own account of the inception and completion of the History, see the extracts from the *Memoirs*, pages 545-6, below. The present extract is from the opening of Volume V; in presenting a sketch of the contents of that and the final volume, it well exemplifies Gibbon's panoramic method.]

#### CHAPTER XLVIII

I HAVE now deduced from Trajan to Constantine, from Constantine to Heraclius, the regular series of the Roman emperors; and faithfully exposed the prosperous and adverse fortunes of their reigns. Five centuries of the decline and fall of the empire have already elapsed; but a period of more than eight hundred years still separates me from the term of my labors, the taking of Constantinople by the Turks. Should I persevere in the same course, should I observe the same measure, a prolix and slender thread would be spun through many a volume, nor would the patient reader find an adequate reward of instruction or amusement. At every step, as we sink deeper in the decline and fall of the Eastern Empire, the annals of each succeeding reign would impose a more ungrateful and melancholy task. These annals must continue to repeat a tedious and uniform tale of weakness and misery; the natural connection of causes and events would be broken by frequent and hasty transitions, and a minute accumulation of circumstances must destroy the light and effect of those general pictures which compose the use and ornament of a remote history. From the time of Heraclius the Byzantine theatre is contracted and darkened: the line of empire, which had been defined by the laws of Justinian and the arms of Belisarius, recedes on all sides from our view; the Roman name, the proper subject of

our inquiries, is reduced to a narrow corner of Europe, to the lonely suburbs of Constantinople; and the fate of the Greek empire has been compared to that of the Rhine, which loses itself in the sands before its waters can mingle in the ocean. The scale of dominion is diminished to our view by the distance of time and place; nor is the loss of external splendor compensated by the nobler gifts of virtue and genius. In the last moments of her decay Constantinople was doubtless more opulent and prosperous than Athens at her most flourishing era, when a scanty sum of six thousand talents, or twelve hundred thousand pounds sterling, was possessed by twenty-one thousand male citizens of an adult age. But each of these citizens was a freeman who dared to assert the liberty of his thoughts, words, and actions; whose person and property were guarded by equal law; and who exercised his independent vote in the government of the republic. Their numbers seem to be multiplied by the strong and various discriminations of character; under the shield of freedom, on the wings of emulation and vanity, each Athenian aspired to the level of the national dignity; from this commanding eminence some chosen spirits soared beyond the reach of a vulgar eye; and the chances of superior merit in a great and populous kingdom, as they are proved by experience, would excuse the computation of imaginary millions. The territories of Athens, Sparta, and their allies do not exceed a moderate province of France or England; but after the trophies of Salamis and Plataea, they expand in our fancy to the gigantic size of Asia, which had been trampled under the feet of the victorious Greeks. But the subjects of the Byzantine empire, who assume and dishonor the names both of Greeks and Romans, present a dead uniformity of abject vices, which are neither softened by the weakness of humanity nor animated by the vigor of memorable crimes. The freemen of antiquity might repeat with generous enthusiasm the sentence of Homer, "that on the first day of his servitude the captive is deprived of one half of his manly virtue." But the poet had only seen the effects of civil or domestic slavery, nor could he foretell that the second moiety of manhood must be annihilated by the spiritual despotism, which shackles not only the actions but even the thoughts of the prostrate votary. By this double yoke the Greeks were oppressed under the successors of



Heraclius; the tyrant, a law of eternal justice, was degraded by the vices of his subjects; and on the throne, in the camp, in the schools, we search, perhaps with fruitless diligence, the names and characters that may deserve to be rescued from oblivion. Nor are the defects of the subject compensated by the skill and variety of the painters. Of a space of eight hundred years, the four first centuries are overspread with a cloud interrupted by some faint and broken rays of historic light: in the lives of the emperors, from Maurice to Alexius, Basil the Macedonian has alone been the theme of a separate work; and the absence, or loss, or imperfection of contemporary evidence must be poorly supplied by the doubtful authority of more recent compilers. The four last centuries are exempt from the reproach of penury: and with the Comnenian family the historic muse of Constantinople again revives, but her apparel is gaudy, her motions are without elegance or grace. A succession of priests or courtiers treads in each other's footsteps, in the same path of servitude and superstition; their views are narrow, their judgment is feeble or corrupt; and we close the volume of copious barrenness, still ignorant of the causes of events, the characters of the actors, and the manners of the times which they celebrate or deplore. The observation which has been applied to a man may be extended to a whole people, that the energy of the sword is communicated to the pen; and it will be found by experience that the tone of history will rise or fall with the spirit of the age.

From these considerations I should have abandoned without regret the Greek slaves and their servile historians, had I not reflected that the fate of the Byzantine monarchy is *passively* connected with the most splendid and important revolutions which have changed the state of the world. The space of the lost provinces was immediately replenished with new colonies and rising kingdoms: the active virtues of peace and war deserted from the vanquished to the victorious nations; and it is in their origin and conquests, in their religion and government, that we must explore the causes and effects of the decline and fall of the Eastern empire. Nor will this scope of narrative, the riches and variety of these materials, be incompatible with the unity of design and composition. As, in his daily prayers, the Mussulman of Fez or Delhi still turns his face towards the

Temple of Mecca, the historian's eye shall be always fixed on the city of Constantinople. The excursive line may embrace the wilds of Arabia and Tartary, but the circle will be ultimately reduced to the decreasing limit of the Roman monarchy.

On this principle I shall now establish the plan of the last two volumes of the present work. The first chapter will contain, in a regular series, the emperors who reigned at Constantinople during a period of six hundred years, from the days of Heraclius to the Latin conquest: a rapid abstract, which may be supported by a general appeal to the order and text of the original historians. In this introduction I shall confine myself to the revolutions of the throne, the succession of families, the personal characters of the Greek princes, the mode of their life and death, the maxims and influence of their domestic government, and the tendency of their reign to accelerate or suspend the downfall of the Eastern empire. Such a chronological review will serve to illustrate the various argument of the subsequent chapters; and each circumstance of the eventful story of the barbarians will adapt itself in a proper place to the Byzantine annals. The internal state of the empire, and the dangerous heresy of the Paulicians, which shook the East and enlightened the West, will be the subject of two separate chapters; but these inquiries must be postponed till our farther progress shall have opened the view of the world in the ninth and tenth centuries of the Christian era. After this foundation of Byzantine history, the following nations will pass before our eyes, and each will occupy the space to which it may be entitled by greatness or merit, or the degree of connection with the Roman world and the present age. I, The FRANKS; a general appellation which includes all the barbarians of France, Italy, and Germany, who were united by the sword and sceptre of Charlemagne. The persecution of images and their votaries separated Rome and Italy from the Byzantine throne, and prepared the restoration of the Roman empire in the West. II, The ARABS or SARACENS. Three ample chapters will be devoted to this curious and interesting object. In the first, after a picture of the country and its inhabitants, I shall investigate the character of Mahomet; the character, religion, and success of the prophet. In the second I shall lead the Arabs to the conquest

of Syria, Egypt, and Africa, the provinces of the Roman empire; nor can I check their victorious career till they have overthrown the monarchies of Persia and Spain. In the third I shall inquire how Constantinople and Europe were saved by the luxury and arts, the division and decay, of the empire of the caliphs. A single chapter will include — III, The BULGARIANS, IV, HUNGARIANS, and, V, RUSSIANS, who assaulted by sea or by land the provinces and the capital; but the last of these, so important in their present greatness, will excite some curiosity in their origin and infancy. VI, The NORMANS; or rather the private adventures of that warlike people, who founded a powerful kingdom in Apulia and Sicily, shook the throne of Constantinople, displayed the trophies of chivalry, and almost realized the wonders of romance. VII, The LATINS; the subjects of the Pope, the nations of the West, who enlisted under the banner of the cross for the recovery or relief of the holy sepulchre. The Greek emperors were terrified and preserved by the myriads of pilgrims who marched to Jerusalem with Godfrey of Bouillon and the peers of Christendom. The second and third crusades trod in the footsteps of the first: Asia and Europe were mingled in a sacred war of two hundred years; and the Christian powers were bravely resisted and finally expelled by Saladin and the Mamelukes of Egypt. In these memorable crusades a fleet and army of French and Venetians were diverted from Syria to the Thracian Bosphorus: they assaulted the capital, they subverted the Greek monarchy; and a dynasty of Latin princes was seated near three-score years on the throne of Constantine. VIII, The GREEKS themselves, during this period of captivity and exile, must be considered as a foreign nation; the enemies, and again the sovereigns, of Constantinople. Misfortune had rekindled a spark of national virtue, and the imperial series may be continued with some dignity from their restoration to the Turkish conquest. IX, The MOGULS and TARTARS. By the arms of Zingis and his descendants, the globe was shaken from China to Poland and Greece; the sultans were overthrown; the caliphs fell, and the Cæsars trembled on their throne. The victories of Timour suspended above fifty years the final ruin of the Byzantine empire. X. I have already noticed the first appearance of the TURKS; and the names of the fathers, of Seljuk and Othman, discriminate the two successive dynasties



of the nation which emerged in the eleventh century from the Scythian wilderness. The former established a potent and splendid kingdom from the banks of the Oxus to Antioch and Nice, and the first crusade was provoked by the violation of Jerusalem and the danger of Constantinople. From an humble origin the Ottomans arose the scourge and terror of Christendom. Constantinople was besieged and taken by Mahomet II, and his triumph annihilates the remnant, the image, the title, of the Roman empire in the East. The schism of the Greeks will be connected with their last calamities and the restoration of learning in the Western world. I shall return from the captivity of the new to the ruins of ancient Rome; and the venerable name, the interesting theme, will shed a ray of glory on the conclusion of my labors. . . .

## MEMOIRS OF MY LIFE AND WRITINGS

1796

[These Memoirs appeared in the *Miscellaneous Works* of Gibbon, edited by his friend Lord Sheffield, two years after his death. Sheffield spoke of them as "a work which he seems to have projected with peculiar solicitude and attention, and of which he left six different sketches, all in his own handwriting. One of these . . . ends at the time when he quitted Oxford; another at the year 1764, when he traveled to Italy; a third, at his father's death in 1770. A fourth, which he continued to a short time after his return to Lausanne in 1788, appears in the form of annals, much less detailed than the others. The two remaining sketches are still more imperfect. It is difficult to discover the order in which these several pieces were written, but there is reason to believe that the most copious was the last. From all these the following Memoirs have been carefully selected and put together." The allusion in the third of the extracts that follow is to the controversy aroused by the 15th and 16th chapters of the first volume of the History, in which Gibbon undertook to explain the growth of Christianity from a rationalistic standpoint. The passages here reprinted will be found in Dr. Birkbeck Hill's edition of the Memoirs, pages 50-59, 167, 201-205, 224-225, 239-244.]

To the University of Oxford I acknowledge no obligation; and she will as cheerfully renounce me for a son as I am willing to disclaim her for a mother. I spent fourteen months at Magdalen College; they proved the fourteen months the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life. The reader will pronounce between the school and the scholar; but I cannot

affect to believe that Nature had disqualified me for all literary pursuits. The specious and ready excuse of my tender age, imperfect preparation, and hasty departure may doubtless be alleged, nor do I wish to defraud such excuses of their proper weight. Yet in my sixteenth year I was not devoid of capacity or application; even my childish reading had displayed an early though blind propensity for books; and the shallow flood might have been taught to flow in a deep channel and a clear stream. In the discipline of a well-constituted academy, under the guidance of skillful and vigilant professors, I should gradually have risen from translations to originals, from the Latin to the Greek classics, from dead languages to living science; my hours would have been occupied by useful and agreeable studies, the wanderings of fancy would have been restrained, and I should have escaped the temptations of idleness which finally precipitated my departure from Oxford.

Perhaps in a separate annotation I may coolly examine the fabulous and real antiquities of our sister universities, a question which has kindled such fierce and foolish disputes among their fanatic sons. In the meanwhile it will be acknowledged that these venerable bodies are sufficiently old to partake of all the prejudices and infirmities of age. The schools of Oxford and Cambridge were founded in a dark age of false and barbarous science, and they are still tainted with the vices of their origin. Their primitive discipline was adapted to the education of priests and monks, and the government still remains in the hands of the clergy, an order of men whose manners are remote from the present world, and whose eyes are dazzled by the light of philosophy. The legal incorporation of these societies by the charters of popes and kings had given them a monopoly of the public instruction, and the spirit of monopolists is narrow, lazy, and oppressive; their work is more costly and less productive than that of independent artists, and the new improvements so eagerly grasped by the competition of freedom are admitted with slow and sullen reluctance in those proud corporations, above the fear of a rival and below the confession of an error. We may scarcely hope that any reformation will be a voluntary act; and so deeply rooted are they in law and prejudice, that even the omnipotence of Parliament would shrink from an inquiry into the state and abuses of the two universities. . . .

In all the universities of Europe, excepting our own, the languages and sciences are distributed among a numerous list of effective professors; the students, according to their taste, their calling, and their diligence, apply themselves to the proper masters; and in the annual repetition of public and private lectures these masters are assiduously employed. Our curiosity may inquire what number of professors has been instituted at Oxford (for I shall now confine myself to my own university). By whom are they appointed, and what may be the probable chances of merit or incapacity? How many are stationed to the three faculties, and how many are left for the liberal arts? What is the form, and what the substance, of their lessons? But all these questions are silenced by one short and singular answer: that in the University of Oxford the greater part of the public professors have for these many years given up altogether even the pretence of teaching. . . .

The fellows or monks of my time were decent, easy men, who supinely enjoyed the gifts of the founder. Their days were filled by a series of uniform employments; the chapel and the hall, the coffee-house and the common room, till they retired, weary and well satisfied, to a long slumber. From the toil of reading, or thinking, or writing, they had absolved their conscience, and the first shoots of learning and ingenuity withered on the ground, without yielding any fruits to the owners or the public. As a gentleman-commoner, I was admitted to the society of the fellows, and fondly expected that some questions of literature would be the amusing and instructive topics of their discourse. Their conversation stagnated in a round of college business, Tory politics, personal anecdotes, and private scandal; their dull and deep potations excused the brisk intemperance of youth; and their constitutional toasts were not expressive of the most lively loyalty for the house of Hanover. . . . The example of the senior fellows could not inspire the undergraduates with a liberal spirit or studious emulation; and I cannot describe, as I never knew, the discipline of college. Some duties may possibly have been imposed on the poor scholars whose ambition aspired to the peaceful honors of a fellowship (*ascribi quietis ordinibus . . . deorum*),<sup>1</sup> but no independent members were admitted below the rank of a gentleman-com-

<sup>1</sup> "To be enrolled in the peaceful ranks of the gods."



moner, and our velvet cap was the cap of liberty. A tradition prevailed that some of our predecessors had spoken Latin declamations in the hall, but of this ancient custom no vestige remained. The obvious methods of public exercises and examinations were totally unknown, and I have never heard that either the president or the society interfered in the private economy of the tutors and their pupils. . . .

It was at Rome, on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the Decline and Fall of the city first started to my mind. But my original plan was circumscribed to the decay of the city rather than the empire; and though my reading and reflections began to point towards that object, some years elapsed, and several avocations intervened, before I was seriously engaged in the execution of that laborious work.

. . . Had I believed that the majority of English readers were so fondly attached even to the name and shadow of Christianity, — had I foreseen that the pious, the timid, and the prudent would feel, or affect to feel, with such exquisite sensibility — I might perhaps have softened the two invidious chapters, which would create many enemies and conciliate few friends. But the shaft was shot, the alarm was sounded, and I could only rejoice that, if the voice of our priests was clamorous and bitter, their hands were disarmed from the powers of persecution. I adhered to the wise resolution of trusting myself and my writings to the candor of the public, till Mr. Davies of Oxford presumed to attack, not the faith, but the fidelity of the historian. My *Vindication*, expressive of less anger than contempt, amused for a moment the busy and idle metropolis, and the most rational part of the laity, and even of the clergy, appear to have been satisfied of my innocence and accuracy. I would not print this *Vindication* in quarto, lest it should be bound and preserved with the History itself. At the distance of twelve years, I calmly affirm my judgment of Davies, Chelsum, etc. A victory over such antagonists was a sufficient humiliation. They, however, were rewarded in this world. Poor Chelsum was indeed neglected, and I dare not boast the

making Dr. Watson a bishop, — he is a prelate of a large mind and liberal spirit; but I enjoyed the pleasure of giving a royal pension to Mr. Davies, and of collating Dr. Apthorpe to an archi-episcopal living. Their success encouraged the zeal of Taylor the Arian and Milner the Methodist, with many others whom it would be difficult to remember and tedious to rehearse. The list of my adversaries, however, was graced with the more respectable names of Dr. Priestley, Sir David Dalrymple, and Dr. White; and every polemic of either university discharged his sermon or pamphlet against the impenetrable silence of the Roman historian. . . . I have praised, and I still praise, the eloquent sermons which were preached in St. Mary's pulpit at Oxford by Dr. White. If he assaulted me with some degree of illiberal acrimony, in such a place and before such an audience he was obliged to speak the language of the country. I smiled at a passage in one of his private letters to Mr. Badcock: "The part where we encounter Gibbon must be brilliant and striking." In a sermon preached before the University of Cambridge, Dr. Edwards complimented a work "which can only perish with the language itself," and esteems the author a formidable enemy. He is, indeed, astonished that more learning and ingenuity has not been shown in the defense of Israel; that the prelates and dignitaries of the Church (alas, good man!) did not vie with each other whose stone should sink deepest in the forehead of this Goliath. . . . Let me frankly own that I was startled at the first discharge of ecclesiastical ordnance; but as soon as I found that this empty noise was mischievous only in the intention, my fear was converted into indignation, and every feeling of indignation or curiosity has long since subsided in pure and placid indifference.

. . . I have presumed to mark the moment of conception: I shall now commemorate the hour of my final deliverance. It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from

the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on the recovery of my freedom, and perhaps the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that, whatsoever might be the future date of my History, the life of the historian must be short and precarious. I will add two facts which have seldom occurred in the composition of six, or at least of five, quartos. 1. My first rough manuscript, without any intermediate copy, has been sent to the press. 2. Not a sheet has been seen by any human eyes, excepting those of the author and the printer. The faults and the merits are exclusively my own.

. . . When I contemplate the common lot of mortality, I must acknowledge that I have drawn a high prize in the lottery of life. The far greater part of the globe is overspread with barbarism or slavery. In the civilized world the most numerous class is condemned to ignorance and poverty; and the double fortune of my birth in a free and enlightened country, in an honorable and wealthy family, is the lucky chance of an unit against millions. The general probability is about three to one that a new-born infant will not live to complete his fiftieth year. I have now passed that age, and may fairly estimate the present value of my existence in the threefold division of mind, body, and estate.

1. The first and indispensable requisite of happiness is a clear conscience, unsullied by the reproach or remembrance of an unworthy action.

*Hic murus aheneus esto,  
Nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa.*<sup>1</sup>

I am endowed with a cheerful temper, a moderate sensibility, and a natural disposition to repose rather than to activity; some mischievous appetites and habits have perhaps been corrected by philosophy or time. The love of study, a passion which derives fresh vigor from enjoyment, supplies each day, each hour, with a perpetual source of independent and ra-

<sup>1</sup> "This be one's brazen wall, to feel no consciousness of guilt, nor grow pale through misconduct."



tional pleasure, and I am not sensible of any decay of the mental faculties. The original soil has been highly improved by cultivation; but it may be questioned whether some flowers of fancy, some grateful errors, have not been eradicated with the roots of prejudice. 2. Since I have escaped from the long perils of my childhood, the serious advice of a physician has seldom been requisite. "The madness of superfluous health" I have never known; but my tender constitution has been fortified by time, and the inestimable gift of the sound and peaceful slumbers of infancy may be imputed both to the mind and the body. 3. I have already described the merits of my society and situation; but these enjoyments would be tasteless or bitter if their possession were not assured by an annual and adequate supply. According to the scale of Switzerland I am a rich man; and I am indeed rich, since my income is superior to my expense, and my expense is equal to my wishes. My friend Lord Sheffield has kindly relieved me from the cares to which my taste and temper are most adverse; shall I add, that since the failure of my first wishes I have never entertained any serious thoughts of a matrimonial connection? . . .

The present is a fleeting moment, the past is no more, and our prospect of futurity is dark and doubtful. This day may *possibly* be my last; but the laws of probability, so true in general, so fallacious in particular, still allow about fifteen years. I shall soon enter into the period which, as the most agreeable of his long life, was selected by the judgment and experience of the sage Fontenelle. His choice is approved by the eloquent historian of nature,<sup>1</sup> who fixes our moral happiness to the mature season in which our passions are supposed to be calmed, our duties fulfilled, our ambition satisfied, our fame and fortune established on a solid basis. In private conversation that great and amiable man added the weight of his own experience; and this autumnal felicity might be exemplified in the lives of Voltaire, Hume, and many other men of letters. I am far more inclined to embrace than to dispute this comfortable doctrine. I will not suppose any premature decay of the mind or body; but I must reluctantly observe that two causes, the abbreviation of time and the failure of hope, will always tinge with a browner shade the evening of life.

<sup>1</sup> Buffon.

The proportion of a part to the whole is the only standard by which we can measure the length of our existence. At the age of twenty, one year is a tenth, perhaps, of the time which has elapsed within our consciousness and memory; at the age of fifty it is no more than the fortieth, and this relative value continues to decrease till the last sands are shaken by the hand of death. This reasoning may seem metaphysical; but on a trial it will be found satisfactory and just. The warm desires, the long expectations of youth, are founded on the ignorance of themselves and the world; they are gradually damped by time and experience, by disappointment or possession; and after the middle season the crowd must be content to remain at the foot of the mountain, while the few who have climbed the summit aspire to descend or expect to fall. In old age, the consolation of hope is reserved for the tenderness of parents, who commence a new life in their children, the faith of enthusiasts who sing hallelujahs above the clouds, and the vanity of authors who presume the immortality of their name and writings.

GILBERT WHITE  
THE NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES OF  
SELBORNE

1789

[This book, "the only work on natural history which has attained the rank of an English classic," had its origin in White's correspondence with other students of zoölogy, especially Thomas Pennant and Daines Barrington. The extracts that follow are from Letters XVI, XXII, XL, to Pennant, and Letters XIII, XXXVIII, XLIII, L to Barrington.]

April 18, 1768.

. . . I MAKE no doubt but there are three species of the willow-wrens; two I know perfectly, but have not been able yet to procure the third. No two birds can differ more in their notes, and that constantly, than those two that I am acquainted with; for the one has a joyous, easy, laughing note, the other a harsh, loud chirp. The former is every way larger, and three-quarters of an inch longer, and weighs two drachms and a half, while the latter weighs but two; so the songster is one-fifth heavier than the chirper. The chirper (being the first summer bird of passage that is heard, the wryneck sometimes excepted) begins his two notes in the middle of March, and continues them through the spring and summer till the end of August, as appears by my journals. The legs of the larger of these two are flesh-colored; of the less, black.

The grasshopper-lark began his sibilous note in my fields last Saturday. Nothing can be more amusing than the whisper of this little bird, which seems to be close by though at a hundred yards distance, and when close at your ear is scarce any louder than when a great way off. Had I not been a little acquainted with insects, and known that the grasshopper kind is not yet hatched, I should have hardly believed but that it had been a *locusta* whispering in the bushes. The country people laugh when you tell them that it is the note of a bird. It is a most artful creature, skulking in the thickest part of a bush, and will sing at a yard distance, provided it be concealed. . . .



January 2, 1769.

. . . There is no bird, I believe, whose manners I have studied more than that of the *caprimulgus* (the goat-sucker), as it is a wonderful and curious creature; but I have always found that, though sometimes it may chatter as it flies, as I know it does, yet in general it utters its jarring note sitting on a bough; and I have for many a half-hour watched it as it sat with its under mandible quivering, and particularly this summer. It perches usually on a bare twig, with its head lower than its tail, in an attitude well expressed by your draughtsman in the folio *British Zoölogy*. This bird is most punctual in beginning its song exactly at the close of day, — so exactly that I have known it strike up more than once or twice just at the report of the Portsmouth evening gun, which we can hear when the weather is still. It appears to me past all doubt that its notes are formed by organic impulse, by the powers of the parts of its windpipe formed for sound, just as cats purr. You will credit me, I hope, when I assure you that, as my neighbors were assembled in an hermitage on the side of a steep hill where we drink tea, one of these churn-owls came and settled on the cross of that little straw edifice and began to chatter, and continued his note for many minutes; and we were all struck with wonder to find that the organs of that little animal, when put in motion, gave a sensible vibration to the whole building! . . .

September 2, 1774.

. . . The note of the white-throat, which is continually repeated, and often attended with odd gesticulations on the wing, is harsh and displeasing. These birds seem of a pugnacious disposition; for they sing with an erected crest, and attitudes of rivalry and defiance; are shy and wild in breeding-time, avoiding neighborhoods, and haunting lonely lanes and commons, — nay, even the very tops of the Sussex downs, where there are bushes and covert. But in July and August they bring their broods into gardens and orchards, and make great havoc among the summer fruits.

The black-cap has in common a full, sweet, deep, loud, and wild pipe; yet that strain is of short continuance, and his motions are desultory. But when that bird sits calmly, and engages in song in earnest, he pours forth very sweet but inward

melody, and expresses great variety of soft and gentle modulations, superior perhaps to those of any of our warblers, the nightingale excepted. Black-caps mostly haunt orchards and gardens; while they warble their throats are wonderfully distended.

The song of the redstart is superior, though somewhat like that of the white-throat; some birds have a few more notes than others. Sitting very placidly on the top of a tall tree in a village, the cock sings from morning to night; he affects neighborhoods, and avoids solitude, and loves to build in orchards and about houses. With us he perches on the vane of a tall maypole . . .

April 12, 1772.

While I was in Sussex last autumn my residence was at the village near Lewes, from whence I had formerly the pleasure of writing to you. On the 1st November I remarked that the old tortoise, formerly mentioned, began first to dig the ground in order to the forming its hybernaculum, which it had fixed on just beside a great tuft of hepaticas. It scrapes out the ground with its fore-feet, and throws it up over its back with its hind; but the motion of its legs is ridiculously slow, little exceeding the hour-hand of a clock. Nothing can be more assiduous than this creature night and day in scooping the earth, and forcing its great body into the cavity; but, as the noons of that season proved unusually warm and sunny, it was continually interrupted, and called forth by the heat in the middle of the day; and though I continued there till the 13th November, yet the work remained unfinished. Harsher weather, and frosty mornings, would have quickened its operations.

No part of its behavior ever struck me more than the extreme timidity it always expresses with regard to rain; for, though it has a shell that would secure it against the wheel of a loaded cart, yet does it discover as much solicitude about rain as a lady dressed in all her best attire, shuffling away on the first sprinklings, and running its head up in a corner. If attended to, it becomes an excellent weather-glass; for as sure as it walks elate, and as it were on tiptoe, feeding with great earnestness in a morning, so sure will it rain before night. It is totally a diurnal animal, and never pretends to stir after it becomes dark. . . . I was much taken with its sagacity in discerning those

that do it kind offices; for, as soon as the good old lady comes in sight who has waited on it for more than thirty years, it hobbles towards its benefactress with awkward alacrity, but remains inattentive to strangers. Thus not only "the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib," but the most abject reptile and torpid of beings distinguishes the hand that feeds it, and is touched with the feelings of gratitude.

In about three days after I left Sussex, the tortoise retired into the ground under the hepatica.

February 12, 1778.

In a district so diversified as this, so full of hollow vales and hanging woods, it is no wonder that echoes should abound. Many we have discovered that return the cry of a pack of dogs, the notes of a hunting-horn, a tunable ring of bells, or the melody of birds, very agreeably. But we were still at a loss for a polysyllabical articulate echo, till a young gentleman, who had parted from his company in a summer evening walk, and was calling after them, stumbled upon a very curious one in a spot where it might least be expected. At first he was much surprised, and could not be persuaded but that he was mocked by some boy; but repeating his trials in several languages, and finding his respondent to be a very adroit polyglot, he then discerned the deception.

This echo in an evening, before rural noises cease, would repeat ten syllables most articulately and distinctly, especially if quick dactyls were chosen. The last syllables of

*Tityre, tu patulæ recubans —*

were as audibly and intelligibly returned as the first; and there is no doubt, could trial have been made, but that at midnight, when the air is very elastic, and a dead stillness prevails, one or two syllables more might have been obtained; but the distance rendered so late an experiment very inconvenient.

Quick dactyls, we observed, succeeded best; for when we came to try its powers in slow, heavy, embarrassed spondees of the same number of syllables, —

*Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens —*

we could perceive a return but of four or five.

All echoes have some one place to which they are returned



stronger and more distinct than to any other; and that is always the place that lies at right angles with the object of repercussion, and is not too near nor too far off. Buildings, or naked rocks, re-echo much more articulately than hanging woods or vales, because in the latter the voice is as it were entangled and embarrassed in the covert, and weakened in the rebound.

The true object of this echo, as we found by various experiments, is the stone-built, tiled hop-kiln in Gally Lane, which measures in front forty feet, and from the ground to the eaves twelve feet. The true *centrum phonicum*, or just distance, is one particular spot in the king's field, in the path to Nore Hill, on the very brink of the steep balk above the hollow cartway. In this case there is no choice of distance; but the path, by mere contingency, happens to be the lucky, the identical spot, because the ground rises or falls so immediately, if the speaker either retires or advances, that his mouth would at once be above or below the object. . . .

Some time since its discovery this echo is become totally silent, though the object, or hop-kiln, remains. Nor is there any mystery in this defect; for the field between is planted as a hop garden, and the voice of the speaker is totally absorbed and lost among the poles and entangled foliage of the hops. And when the poles are removed in autumn the disappointment is the same; because a tall quick-set hedge, nurtured up for the purpose of shelter to the hop-ground, entirely interrupts the impulse and repercussion of the voice; so that till those obstructions are removed, no more of its garrulity can be expected.

Should any gentleman of fortune think an echo in his park or outlet a pleasing incident, he might build one at little or no expense. For, whenever he had occasion for a new barn, stable, dog-kennel, or like structure, it would be only needful to erect this building on the gentle declivity of a hill, with a like rising opposite to it, at a few hundred yards distance; and perhaps success might be the easier ensured could some canal, lake, or stream intervene. From a seat at the *centrum phonicum* he and his friends might amuse themselves sometimes of an evening with the prattle of this loquacious nymph, of whose compla-

cency and decent reserve more may be said than can with truth of every individual of her sex, since she is

*quæ nec reticere loquenti,  
Nec prior ipsa loqui didicit resonabilis echo.*<sup>1</sup>

September 9, 1778.

. . . No inhabitants of a yard seem possessed of such a variety of expression, and so copious a language, as common poultry. Take a chicken of four or five days old, and hold it up to a window where there are flies, and it will immediately seize its prey with little twitterings of complacency; but if you tender it a wasp or a bee, at once its note becomes harsh, and expressive of disapprobation and a sense of danger. When a pullet is ready to lay, she intimates the event by a joyous and easy soft note. Of all the occurrences of their life that of laying seems to be the most important; for no sooner has a hen disburdened herself, than she rushes forth with a clamorous kind of joy, which the cock and the rest of his mistresses immediately adopt. The tumult is not confined to the family concerned, but catches from yard to yard, and spreads to every homestead within hearing, till at last the whole village is in an uproar. As soon as a hen becomes a mother her new relation demands a new language; she then runs clucking and screaming about, and seems agitated as if possessed. The father of the flock has also a considerable vocabulary. If he finds food, he calls a favorite concubine to partake; and if a bird of prey passes over, with a warning voice he bids his family beware. The gallant chanticleer has, at command, his amorous phrases and his terms of defiance. But the sound by which he is best known is his crowing; by this he has been distinguished in all ages as the countryman's clock or larum, as the watchman that proclaims the divisions of the night. Thus the poet elegantly styles him —

— the crested cock, whose clarion sounds  
The silent hours. . . .

April 21, 1780.

The old Sussex tortoise, that I have mentioned to you so often, is become my property. I dug it out of its winter dormitory in March last, when it was enough awakened to express its

<sup>1</sup> "Answering echo, who has neither learned to keep silence when spoken to, nor to speak first herself."

resentment by hissing; and, packing it in a box with earth, carried it eighty miles in post-chaises. The rattle and hurry of the journey so perfectly roused it that, when I turned it out on a border, it walked twice down to the bottom of my garden. However, in the evening, the weather being cold, it buried itself in the loose mould, and continues still concealed. As it will be under my eye, I shall now have an opportunity of enlarging my observations on its mode of life; and already perceive that, towards the time of coming forth, it opens a breathing place in the ground near its head, — requiring, I conclude, a freer respiration as it becomes more alive. This creature not only goes under the earth from the middle of November to the middle of April, but sleeps great part of the summer; for it goes to bed in the longest days at four in the afternoon, and often does not stir in the morning till late. Besides, it retires to rest for every shower, and does not move at all in wet days.

When one reflects on the state of this strange being, it is a matter of wonder to find that Providence should bestow such a profusion of days, such a seeming waste of longevity, on a reptile that appears to relish it so little as to squander more than two-thirds of its existence in a joyless stupor, and be lost to all sensation for months together in the profoundest of slumbers.

While I was writing this letter, a moist and warm afternoon, with the thermometer at 50°, brought forth troops of shell-snails; and at the same juncture the tortoise heaved up the mould and put out its head, and the next morning came forth, as it were, raised from the dead, and walked about till four in the afternoon. This was a curious coincidence, a very amusing occurrence! to see such a similarity of feelings between the two *φερέουκοι*, — for so the Greeks call both the shell-snail and the tortoise. . . .

Because we call this creature an abject reptile, we are too apt to undervalue his abilities and depreciate his powers of instinct. Yet he is, as Mr. Pope says of his lord, —

Much too wise to walk into a well, .

and has so much discernment as not to fall down a haha, but to stop and withdraw from the brink with the readiest precaution. Though he loves warm weather, he avoids the hot sun, because his thick shell, when once heated, would, as the poet says



of solid armor, "scald with safety." He therefore spends the more sultry hours under the umbrella of a large cabbage leaf, or amidst the waving forests of an asparagus bed. But, as he avoids heat in the summer, so, in the decline of the year, he improves the faint autumnal beams by getting within the reflection of a fruit-wall; and though he never has read that planes inclining to the horizon receive a greater share of warmth, he inclines his shell, by tilting it against the wall, to collect and admit every feeble ray.

Pitiable seems the condition of this poor embarrassed reptile, — to be cased in a suit of ponderous armor, which he cannot lay aside; to be imprisoned, as it were, within his own shell, must preclude, we should suppose, all activity and disposition for enterprise. Yet there is a season of the year (usually the beginning of June) when his exertions are remarkable. He then walks on tiptoe, and is stirring by five in the morning; and, traversing the garden, examines every wicket and interstice in the fences, through which he will escape if possible; and often has eluded the care of the gardener, and wandered to some distant field. The motives that impel him to undertake these rambles seem to be of the amorous kind; his fancy then becomes intent on attachments, which transport him beyond his usual gravity, and induce him to forget for a time his ordinary solemn deportment.

## EDMUND BURKE

### A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN OF OUR IDEAS OF THE SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL

1756

[This work was published when Burke was twenty-six years old, and had been begun when he was in his nineteenth year. The first four parts of the treatise deal with the nature of pleasure, of beauty, and of the sublime, with special reference to physical objects and their impressions on the senses; the fifth part, on language and literature, is reproduced here. The text is the revised form of the second edition (1757), to which Burke added a prefatory discourse on Taste, following out some of the matters taken up by Addison in his paper on the subject. While the psychology of the whole essay is now obsolete, it remains both intrinsically interesting and historically significant as one of the earliest English studies in the theory of æsthetics. In particular, the discussion in Part V of the comparative powers of language and the arts of form, influenced Lessing's treatment of the same subject in his *Laocoön* (1766).]

#### PART V

*Section I. OF WORDS.* Natural objects affect us, by the laws of that connection which Providence has established between certain motions and configurations of bodies, and certain consequent feelings in our mind. Painting affects in the same manner, but with the superadded pleasure of imitation. Architecture affects by the laws of nature and the law of reason; from which latter result the rules of proportion, which make a work to be praised or censured, in the whole or in some part, when the end for which it was designed is or is not properly answered. But as to words, they seem to me to affect us in a manner very different from that in which we are affected by natural objects, or by painting or architecture; yet words have as considerable a share in exciting ideas of beauty and of the sublime as many of those, and sometimes a much greater than any of them. Therefore an inquiry into the manner by which they excite such emotions is far from being unnecessary, in a discourse of this kind.

*Section II.* THE COMMON EFFECTS OF POETRY, NOT BY RAISING IDEAS OF THINGS. The common notion of the power of poetry and eloquence, as well as that of words in ordinary conversation, is that they affect the mind by raising in it ideas of those things for which custom has appointed them to stand. To examine the truth of this notion, it may be requisite to observe that words may be divided into three sorts. The first are such as represent many simple ideas *united by nature* to form some one determinate composition, as man, horse, tree, castle, etc. These I call *aggregate* words. The second are they that stand for one simple idea of such compositions, and no more; as red, blue, round, square, and the like. These I call *simple abstract* words. The third are those which are formed by an union — an arbitrary union — of both the others, and of the various relations between them, in greater or lesser degrees of complexity; as virtue, honor, persuasion, magistrate, and the like. These I call *compound abstract* words. Words, I am sensible, are capable of being classed into more curious distinctions; but these seem to be natural, and enough for our purpose; and they are disposed in that order in which they are commonly taught, and in which the mind gets the ideas they are substituted for.

I shall begin with the third sort of words, — compound abstracts, such as virtue, honor, persuasion, docility. Of these I am convinced that, whatever power they may have on the passions, they do not derive it from any representation raised in the mind of the things for which they stand. As compositions, they are not real essences, and hardly cause, I think, any real ideas. Nobody, I believe, immediately on hearing the sounds virtue, liberty, or honor, conceives any precise notions of the particular modes of action and thinking, together with the mixed and simple ideas, and the several relations of them, for which these words are substituted. Neither has he any general idea, compounded of them; for if he had, then some of those particular ones, though indistinct, perhaps, and confused, might soon come to be perceived. But this, I take it, is hardly ever the case. For, put yourself upon analyzing one of these words, and you must reduce it from one set of general words to another, and then into the simple abstracts and aggregates, in a much longer series than may be at first imagined,



before any real idea emerges to light, — before you come to discover anything like the first principles of such compositions; and when you have made such a discovery of the original ideas, the effect of the composition is utterly lost. A train of thinking of this sort is much too long to be pursued in the ordinary ways of conversation; nor is it at all necessary that it should. Such words are in reality but mere sounds; but they are sounds which, being used on particular occasions, wherein we receive some good, or suffer some evil, or see others affected with good or evil, or which we hear applied to other interesting things or events; and being applied in such a variety of cases that we know readily by habit to what things they belong, they produce in the mind, whenever they are afterwards mentioned, effects similar to those of their occasions. The sounds being often used without reference to any particular occasion, and carrying still their first impressions, they at last utterly lose their connection with the particular occasions that gave rise to them; yet the sound, without any annexed notion, continues to operate as before.

*Section III.* GENERAL WORDS BEFORE IDEAS. Mr. Locke has somewhere observed, with his usual sagacity, that most general words — those belonging to virtue and vice, good and evil, especially — are taught before the particular modes of action to which they belong are presented to the mind; and with them the love of the one, and the abhorrence of the other. For the minds of children are so ductile that a nurse, or any person about a child, by seeming pleased or displeased with any thing, or even any word, may give the disposition of the child a similar turn. When, afterwards, the several occurrences in life come to be applied to these words, and that which is pleasant often appears under the name of evil, and what is disagreeable to nature is called good and virtuous, a strange confusion of ideas and affections arises in the minds of many, and an appearance of no small contradiction between their notions and their actions. There are many who love virtue and who detest vice, and this not from hypocrisy or affectation, who notwithstanding very frequently act ill and wickedly in particulars, without the least remorse, because these particular occasions never came into view when the passions on the side of virtue were so

warmly affected by certain words heated originally by the breath of others. And for this reason it is hard to repeat certain sets of words, though owned by themselves unoperative, without being in some degree affected, especially if a warm and affecting tone of voice accompanies them. As suppose —

Wise, valiant, generous, good, and great.

These words, by having no application, ought to be unoperative; but when words commonly sacred to great occasions are used, we are affected by them, even without the occasions. When words which have been generally so applied are put together without any rational view, or in such a manner that they do not rightly agree with each other, the style is called bombast. And it requires in several cases much good sense and experience to be guarded against the force of such language; for when propriety is neglected, a greater number of these affecting words may be taken into the service, and a greater variety may be indulged in combining them.

*Section IV. THE EFFECT OF WORDS.* If words have all their possible extent of power, three effects arise in the mind of the hearer. The first is, the *sound*; the second, the *picture*, or representation of the thing signified by the sound; the third is the *affection* of the soul produced by one or by both of the foregoing. Compounded abstract words, of which we have been speaking (honor, justice, liberty, and the like), produce the first and the last of these effects, but not the second. Simple abstracts are used to signify some one simple idea, without much adverting to others which may chance to attend it, as blue, green, hot, cold, and the like. These are capable of affecting all three of the purposes of words, as the aggregate words (man, castle, horse, etc.) are in a yet higher degree. But I am of opinion that the most general effect, even of these words, does not arise from their forming pictures of the several things they would represent in the imagination; because, on a very diligent examination of my own mind, and getting others to consider theirs, I do not find that once in twenty times any such picture is formed; and when it is, there is most commonly a particular effort of the imagination for that purpose. But the aggregate words operate, as I said of the compound-abstracts, not by

presenting any image to the mind, but by having from use the same effect, on being mentioned, that their original has when it is seen.

Suppose we were to read a passage to this effect: "The river Danube rises in a moist and mountainous soil in the heart of Germany, where, winding to and fro, it waters several principalities, until, turning into Austria, and laving the walls of Vienna, it passes into Hungary. There, with a vast flood, augmented by the Saave and the Drave, it quits Christendom, and, rolling through the barbarous countries which border on Tartary, it enters by many mouths in the Black Sea." In this description many things are mentioned, as mountains, rivers, cities, the sea, etc. But let anybody examine himself, and see whether he has had impressed on his imagination any pictures of a river, mountain, watery soil, Germany, etc. Indeed it is impossible, in the rapidity and quick succession of words in conversation, to have ideas both of the sound of the word and of the thing represented. Besides, some words, expressing real essences, are so mixed with others of a general and nominal import, that it is impracticable to jump from sense to thought, from particulars to generals, from things to words, in such a manner as to answer the purposes of life; nor is it necessary that we should.

*Section V. EXAMPLES THAT WORDS MAY AFFECT WITHOUT RAISING IMAGES.* I find it hard to persuade several that their passions are affected by words from whence they have no ideas, and yet harder to convince them that, in the ordinary course of conversation, we are sufficiently understood without raising any images of the things concerning which we speak. It seems to be an odd subject of dispute with any man, whether he has ideas in his mind or not. Of this, at first view, every man, in his own forum, ought to judge without appeal. But, strange as it may appear, we are often at a loss to know what ideas we have of things, or whether we have any ideas at all upon some subjects. It even requires a good deal of attention to be thoroughly satisfied on this head. Since I wrote these papers, I found two very striking instances of the possibility there is that a man may hear words without having any idea of the things which they represent, and yet afterwards be capable of return-



ing them to others, combined in a new way, and with great propriety, energy, and instruction. The first instance is that of Mr. Blacklock, a poet blind from his birth. Few men blessed with the most perfect sight can describe visual objects with more spirit and justness than this blind man, which cannot possibly be attributed to his having a clearer conception of the things he describes than is common to other persons. Mr. Spence, in an elegant preface which he has written to the works of this poet, reasons very ingeniously and, I imagine, for the most part very rightly, upon the cause of this extraordinary phenomenon. But I cannot altogether agree with him that some improprieties in language and thought, which occur in these poems, have arisen from the blind poet's imperfect conception of visual objects, since such improprieties, and much greater, may be found in writers even of a higher class than Mr. Blacklock, and who notwithstanding possessed the faculty of seeing in its full perfection. Here is a poet doubtless as much affected by his own descriptions as any that reads them can be; and yet he is affected with this strong enthusiasm by things of which he neither has, nor can possibly have, any idea further than that of a bare sound. And why may not those who read his works be affected in the same manner that he was, with as little of any real ideas of the things described?

The second instance is of Mr. Saunderson, professor of mathematics in the University of Cambridge. This learned man had acquired great knowledge in natural philosophy, in astronomy, and whatever sciences depend upon mathematical skill. What was the most extraordinary, and the most to my purpose, he gave excellent lectures upon light and colors; and this man taught others the theory of those ideas which they had, and which he himself undoubtedly had not. But it is probable that the words red, blue, green, answered to him as well as the ideas of the colors themselves; for, the ideas of greater or lesser degrees of refrangibility being applied to these words, and the blind man being instructed in what other respects they were found to agree or to disagree, it was as easy for him to reason upon the words as if he had been fully master of the ideas. Indeed it must be owned he could make no new discoveries in the way of experiment. He did nothing but what we do every day in common discourse. When I wrote this last sentence, and

used the words "every day" and "common discourse," I had no images in my mind of any succession of time, nor of men in conference with each other; nor do I imagine that the reader will have any such ideas on reading it. Neither when I spoke of red, or blue, or green, as well as refrangibility, had I these several colors, or the rays of light passing into a different medium and there diverted from their course, painted before me in the way of images. I know very well that the mind possesses a faculty of raising such images at pleasure; but then an act of the will is necessary to this, and in ordinary conversation or reading it is very rarely that any image at all is excited in the mind. If I say, "I shall go to Italy next summer," I am well understood. Yet I believe nobody has by this painted in his imagination the exact figure of the speaker passing by land or water, or both, sometimes on horseback, sometimes in a carriage, with all the particulars of the journey. Still less has he any idea of Italy, the country to which I propose to go; or of the greenness of the fields, the ripening of the fruits, and the warmth of the air, with the change to this from a different season, which are the ideas for which the word "summer" is substituted. But least of all has he any image from the word "next"; for this word stands for the idea of many summers, with the exclusion of all but one, and surely the man who says "next summer" has no images of such a succession and such an exclusion. In short, it is not only of those ideas which are commonly called abstract, and of which no image at all can be formed, but even of particular, real beings, that we converse without having any idea of them excited in the imagination, as will certainly appear on a diligent examination of our minds.

Indeed, so little does poetry depend for its effect on the power of raising sensible images, that I am convinced it would lose a very considerable part of its energy, if this were the necessary result of all description. Because that union of affecting words, which is the most powerful of all poetical instruments, would frequently lose its force, along with its propriety and consistency, if the sensible images were always excited. There is not, perhaps, in the whole *Æneid* a more grand and labored passage than the description of Vulcan's cavern in *Ætna*, and the works that are there carried on. Virgil dwells particularly on the formation of the thunder, which he describes unfinished under the

hammers of the Cyclops. But what are the principles of this extraordinary composition?

*Tres imbris torti radios, tres nubis aquosæ  
Addiderant; rutuli tres ignis, et alitis austri;  
Fulgores nunc terrificos, sonitumque, metumque  
Miscebant operi, flammisque sequacibus iras.*

This seems to me admirably sublime; yet if we attend coolly to the kind of sensible images which a combination of ideas of this sort must form, the chimeras of madmen cannot appear more wild and absurd than such a picture. "Three rays of twisted showers, three of watery clouds, three of fire, and three of the winged south wind; then mixed they in the work terrific lightnings, and sound, and fear, and anger, with pursuing flames." This strange composition is formed into a gross body; it is hammered by the Cyclops, it is in part polished, and partly continues rough. The truth is, if poetry gives us a noble assemblage of words corresponding to many noble ideas which are connected by circumstances of time or place, or related to each other as cause and effect, or associated in any natural way, they may be moulded together in any form, and perfectly answer their end. The picturesque connection is not demanded, because no real picture is formed, nor is the effect of the description at all the less upon this account. What is said of Helen by Priam and the old men of his council is generally thought to give us the highest possible idea of that fatal beauty.

*Οὐ νέμεσις Τρῶας καὶ εὐκνήμδας Ἀχαιοὺς  
Τοιγὶδ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολλὸν χρόνον ἀλγεα πάσχειν·  
Αἰνῶς δ' ἀθανάτησι θεῇς εἰς ὄπα ἔοικεν.*

They cried, No wonder such celestial charms  
For nine long years have set the world in arms;  
What winning graces! what majestic mien!  
She moves a goddess, and she looks a queen.

POPE.

Here is not one word said of the particulars of her beauty; nothing which can in the least help us to any precise idea of her person; but yet we are much more touched by this manner of mentioning her than by those long and labored descriptions of Helen, whether handed down by tradition or formed by fancy, which are to be met with in some authors. I am sure it affects me much more than the minute description which Spenser has given of Belphebe, though I own that there are parts in that de-



scription, as there are in all the descriptions of that excellent writer, extremely fine and poetical.

The terrible picture which Lucretius has drawn of Religion, in order to display the magnanimity of his philosophical hero in opposing her, is thought to be designed with great boldness and spirit.

*Humana ante oculos fæde cum vita jaceret,  
In terris, oppressa gravi sub religione,  
Quæ caput e cæli regionibus ostendebat  
Horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans;  
Primus Graius homo mortales tollere contra  
Est oculos ausus*<sup>1</sup> —

What idea do you derive from so excellent a picture? None at all, most certainly; neither has the poet said a single word which might in the least serve to mark a single limb or feature of the phantom which he intended to represent in all the horrors imagination can conceive. In reality, poetry and rhetoric do not succeed in exact description so well as painting does. Their business is to affect rather by sympathy than imitation, to display rather the effect of things on the mind of the speaker, or of others, than to present a clear idea of the things themselves. This is their most extensive province, and that in which they succeed the best.

*Section VI.* POETRY NOT STRICTLY AN IMITATIVE ART. Hence we may observe that poetry, taken in its most general sense, cannot with strict propriety be called an art of imitation. It is indeed an imitation so far as it describes the manners and passions of men which their words can express, — where *animi motus effert interprete lingua*.<sup>2</sup> There it is strictly imitation; and all merely *dramatic* poetry is of this sort. But *descriptive* poetry operates chiefly by substitution, — by the means of sounds which by custom have the effect of realities. Nothing is an imitation further than as it resembles some other thing, and words undoubtedly have no sort of resemblance to the ideas for which they stand.

<sup>1</sup> "When human life to view lay foully prostrate upon earth, crushed down under the weight of Religion, who showed her head from the quarters of heaven with hideous aspect lowering upon mortals, a man of Greece ventured first to lift up his mortal eyes to her face, and first to withstand her to her face." (Translation of Prof. H. A. J. Munro.)

<sup>2</sup> "The emotions of the soul are expressed by the tongue as interpreter."

*Section VII. HOW WORDS INFLUENCE THE PASSIONS.*

Now as words affect, not by any original power, but by representation, it might be supposed that their influence over the passions should be but light; yet it is quite otherwise; for we find by experience that eloquence and poetry are as capable, nay indeed much more capable, of making deep and lively impressions than any other arts, and even than nature itself in very many cases. And this arises chiefly from these three causes. First, that we take an extraordinary part in the passions of others, and that we are easily affected and brought into sympathy by any tokens which are shown of them, and there are no tokens which can express all the circumstances of most passions so fully as words; so that if a person speaks upon any subject, he can not only convey the subject to you, but likewise the manner in which he is himself affected by it. Certain it is, that the influence of most things on our passions is not so much from the things themselves, as from our opinions concerning them; and these again depend very much on the opinions of other men, conveyable\* for the most part by words only. Secondly, there are many things of a very affecting nature, which can seldom occur in the reality, but the words that represent them often do; and thus they have an opportunity of making a deep impression and taking root in the mind, whilst the idea of the reality was transient, and to some perhaps never really occurred in any shape, to whom it is notwithstanding very affecting,—as war, death, famine, etc. Besides, many ideas have never been at all presented to the senses of any men but by words, as God, angels, devils, heaven and hell, all of which have however a great influence over the passions. Thirdly, by words we have it in our power to make such *combinations* as we cannot possibly do otherwise. By this power of combining, we are able, by the addition of well chosen circumstances, to give a new life and force to the simple object. In painting we may represent any fine figure we please, but we never can give it those enlivening touches which it may receive from words. To represent an angel in a picture, you can only draw a beautiful young man winged; but what painting can furnish out anything so grand as the addition of one word, “the angel of the *Lord*”? It is true, I have here no clear idea; but these words affect the mind more than the sensible image did; which is all I contend

tor. A picture of Priam dragged to the altar's foot, and there murdered, if it were well executed would undoubtedly be very moving; but there are very aggravating circumstances which it could never represent: —

*Sanguine foedantem quos ipse sacraverat ignes.*<sup>1</sup>

As a further instance, let us consider those lines of Milton, where he describes the travels of the fallen angels though their dismal habitation: —

— O'er many a dark and dreary vale  
They passed, and many a region dolorous;  
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp;  
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death,  
A universe of death. —

Here is displayed the force of union in —

Rocks, caves, lakes, dens, bogs, fens, and shades;

which yet would lose the greatest part of their effect if they were not the —

Rocks, caves, lakes, dens, bogs, fens, and shades — of *death*.

This idea, or this affection, caused by a word, which nothing but a word could annex to the others, raises a very great degree of the sublime; and this sublime is raised yet higher by what follows, a "*universe of death*." Here are again two ideas not presentable but by language, and an union of them great and amazing beyond conception, — if they may properly be called ideas which present no distinct image to the mind. But still it will be difficult to conceive how words can move the passions which belong to real objects, without representing these objects clearly. This is difficult to us, because we do not sufficiently distinguish, in our observations upon language, between a clear expression and a strong expression. These are frequently confounded with each other, though they are in reality extremely different. The former regards the understanding; the latter belongs to the passions. The one describes a thing as it is; the latter describes it as it is felt. Now as there is a moving tone of voice, an impassioned countenance, an agitated gesture, which affect independently of the things about which they are exerted, so there are words, and certain dispositions of words, which,

<sup>1</sup> "Polluting with his blood the very fires which he had consecrated."



being peculiarly devoted to passionate subjects, and always used by those who are under the influence of any passion, touch and move us more than those which far more clearly and distinctly express the subject-matter. We yield to sympathy what we refuse to description. The truth is, all verbal description, merely as naked description, though never so exact, conveys so poor and insufficient an idea of the thing described, that it could scarcely have the smallest effect, if the speaker did not call in to his aid those modes of speech that mark a strong and lively feeling in himself. Then, by the contagion of our passions, we catch a fire already kindled in another, which probably might never have been struck out by the object described. Words, by strongly conveying the passions, by those means which we have already mentioned, fully compensate for their weakness in other respects. It may be observed that very polished languages, and such as are praised for their superior clearness and perspicuity, are generally deficient in strength. The French language has that perfection and that defect; whereas the Oriental tongues, and in general the languages of most unpolished people, have a great force and energy of expression; and this is but natural. Uncultivated people are but ordinary observers of things, and not critical in distinguishing them; but for that reason they admire more, and are more affected with what they see, and therefore express themselves in a warmer and more passionate manner. If the affection be well conveyed, it will work its effect without any clear idea, often without any idea at all of the thing which has originally given rise to it.

It might be expected, from the fertility of the subject, that I should consider poetry, as it regards the sublime and beautiful, more at large; but it must be observed that in this light it has been often and well handled already. It was not my design to enter into the criticism of the sublime and beautiful in any art, but to attempt to lay down such principles as may tend to ascertain, to distinguish, and to form a sort of standard for them; which purposes I thought might be best effected by an inquiry into the properties of such things in nature as raise love and astonishment in us, and by showing in what manner they operated to produce these passions. Words were only so far to be considered, as to show upon what principle they were capable

of being the representatives of these natural things, and by what powers they were able to affect us often as strongly as the things they represent, and sometimes much more strongly.

## THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF THE PRESENT DISCONTENTS

1770

[This pamphlet was written on behalf of the "Rockingham Whigs." To it, says the account of Burke in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, "is to be attributed the regeneration of the Whigs by the revival of the principles of 1688, which had been wellnigh forgotten by the intrigues of the Bedford faction. Burke defended the popular discontent. . . . The fault lay with the administration; the power of the crown had revived under the name of influence, and the intrigues of the court cabal were taking the place of the interests of the people. . . . The true remedies were to give weight to the opinion of the people by doing away with the secrecy of parliamentary proceedings, and to substitute loyal adherence to party for the influence of the court." The extracts here reproduced are from the concluding portion, in defense of party government.]

. . . It is not enough, in a situation of trust in the commonwealth, that a man means well to his country; it is not enough that in his single person he never did an evil act, but always voted according to his conscience, and even harangued against every design which he apprehended to be prejudicial to the interests of his country. This innoxious and ineffectual character, that seems formed upon a plan of apology and disculpation, falls miserably short of the mark of public duty. That duty demands and requires that what is right should not only be made known, but made prevalent; that what is evil should not only be detected, but defeated. When the public man omits to put himself in a situation of doing his duty with effect, it is an omission that frustrates the purposes of his trust almost as much as if he had formally betrayed it. It is surely no very rational account of a man's life, that he has always acted right, but has taken special care to act in such a manner that his endeavors could not possibly be productive of any consequence.

I do not wonder that the behavior of many parties should have made persons of tender and scrupulous virtue somewhat out of humor with all sorts of connection in politics. I admit that people frequently acquire in such confederacies a narrow,

bigoted, and proscriptive spirit; that they are apt to sink the idea of the general good in this circumscribed and partial interest. But where duty renders a critical situation a necessary one, it is our business to keep free from the evils attendant upon it, and not to fly from the situation itself. If a fortress is seated in an unwholesome air, an officer of the garrison is obliged to be attentive to his health, but he must not desert his station. Every profession, not excepting the glorious one of a soldier, or the sacred one of a priest, is liable to its own particular vices; which, however, form no argument against those ways of life; nor are the vices themselves inevitable to every individual in those professions. Of such a nature are connections in politics; essentially necessary for the full performance of our public duty, accidentally liable to degenerate into faction. Commonwealths are made of families, free commonwealths of parties also; and we may as well affirm that our natural regards and ties of blood tend inevitably to make men bad citizens, as that the bonds of our party weaken those by which we are held to our country.

Some legislators went so far as to make neutrality in party a crime against the state. I do not know whether this might not have been rather to overstrain the principle. Certain it is, the best patriots in the greatest commonwealths have always commended and promoted such connections. *Idem sentire de republica*<sup>1</sup> was with them a principal ground of friendship and attachment; nor do I know any other capable of forming firmer, dearer, more pleasing, more honorable, and more virtuous habits. The Romans carried this principle a great way. Even the holding of offices together, the disposition of which arose from chance, not selection, gave rise to a relation which continued for life. It was called *necessitudo sortis*; and it was looked upon with a sacred reverence. Breaches of any of these kinds of civil relation were considered as acts of the most distinguished turpitude. The whole people was distributed into political societies, in which they acted in support of such interests in the state as they severally affected. For it was then thought no crime to endeavor by every honest means to advance to superiority and power those of your own sentiments and opinions. This wise people was far from imagining that those connections

<sup>1</sup> "To hold the same political opinions."



had no tie, and obliged to no duty, but that men might quit them without shame, upon every call of interest. They believed private honor to be the great foundation of public trust; that friendship was no mean step toward patriotism; that he who, in the common intercourse of life, showed he regarded somebody besides himself, when he came to act in a public situation, might probably consult some other interest than his own. Never may we become *plus sages que les sages*, as the French comedian has happily expressed it, — wiser than all the wise and good men who have lived before us. It was their wish to see public and private virtues, not dissonant and jarring, and mutually destructive, but harmoniously combined, growing out of one another in a noble and orderly gradation, reciprocally supporting and supported. In one of the most fortunate periods of our history this country was governed by a *connection*, — I mean the great connection of Whigs in the reign of Queen Anne. They were complimented upon the principle of this connection by a poet who was in high esteem with them. Addison, who knew their sentiments, could not praise them for what they considered as no proper subject of commendation. As a poet who knew his business, he could not applaud them for a thing which in general estimation was not highly reputable. Addressing himself to Britain, —

Thy favorites grow not up by fortune's sport,  
Or from the crimes or follies of a court;  
On the firm basis of desert they rise,  
From long-tried faith, and friendship's holy ties.

The Whigs of those days believed that the only proper method of rising into power was through hard essays of practiced friendship and experimented fidelity. At that time it was not imagined that patriotism was a bloody idol, which required the sacrifice of children and parents, or dearest connections in private life, and of all the virtues that rise from those relations. They were not of that ingenious paradoxical morality, to imagine that a spirit of moderation was properly shown in patiently bearing the sufferings of your friends; or that disinterestedness was clearly manifested at the expense of other people's fortune. They believed that no men could act with effect, who did not act in concert; that no men could act in concert,

who did not act with confidence; that no men could act with confidence, who were not bound together by common opinions, common affections, and common interests.

These wise men, for such I must call Lord Sunderland, Lord Godolphin, Lord Somers, and Lord Marlborough, were too well principled in these maxims upon which the whole fabric of public strength is built, to be blown off their ground by the breath of every childish talker. They were not afraid that they should be called an ambitious Junto, or that their resolution to stand or fall together should, by placemen, be interpreted into a scuffle for places.

Party is a body of men united, for promoting by their joint endeavors the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed. For my part, I find it impossible to conceive that any one believes in his own politics, or thinks them to be of any weight, who refuses to adopt the means of having them reduced into practice. It is the business of the speculative philosopher to mark the proper ends of government. It is the business of the politician, who is the philosopher in action, to find out proper means towards those ends, and to employ them with effect. Therefore every honorable connection will avow it is their first purpose to pursue every just method to put the men who hold their opinions into such a condition as may enable them to carry their common plans into execution, with all the power and authority of the state. As this power is attached to certain situations, it is their duty to contend for these situations. Without a proscription of others, they are bound to give to their own party the preference in all things, and by no means, for private considerations, to accept any offers of power in which the whole body is not included; nor to suffer themselves to be led, or to be controlled, or to be overbalanced, in office or in council, by those who contradict the very fundamental principles on which their party is formed, and even those upon which every fair connection must stand. Such a generous contention for power, on such manly and honorable maxims, will easily be distinguished from the mean and interested struggle for place and emolument. The very style of such persons will serve to discriminate them from those numberless impostors who have deluded the ignorant with professions incompatible with human practice, and have after-

wards incensed them by practices below the level of vulgar rectitude.

It is an advantage to all narrow wisdom and narrow morals, that their maxims have a plausible air, and, on a cursory view, appear equal to first principles. They are light and portable. They are as current as copper coin, and about as valuable. They serve equally the first capacities and the lowest; and they are at least as useful to the worst men as the best. Of this stamp is the cant of *Not men but measures*, — a sort of charm by which many people get loose from every honorable engagement. When I see a man acting this desultory and disconnected part, with as much detriment to his own fortune as prejudice to the cause of any party, I am not persuaded that he is right, but I am ready to believe he is in earnest. I respect virtue in all its situations, even when it is found in the unsuitable company of weakness. I lament to see qualities, rare and valuable, squandered away without any public utility. But when a gentleman with great visible emoluments abandons the party in which he has long acted, and tells you it is because he proceeds upon his own judgment; that he acts on the merits of the several measures as they arise; and that he is obliged to follow his own conscience, and not that of others; he gives reasons which it is impossible to controvert, and discovers a character which it is impossible to mistake. What shall we think of him who never differed from a certain set of men until the moment they lost their power, and who never agreed with them in a single instance afterwards? Would not such a coincidence of interest and opinion be rather fortunate? Would it not be an extraordinary cast upon the dice, that a man's connections should degenerate into faction, precisely at the critical moment when they lose their power, or he accepts a place? When people desert their connections, the desertion is a manifest *fact*, upon which a direct simple issue lies, triable by plain men. Whether a *measure* of government be right or wrong, is no *matter of fact*, but a mere affair of opinion, on which men may, as they do, dispute and wrangle without end. But whether the individual *thinks* the measure right or wrong, is a point at still a greater distance from the reach of all human decision. It is therefore very convenient to politicians not to put the judgment of their conduct on overt acts, cognizable in any ordinary court, but



upon such matter as can be triable only in that secret tribunal where they are sure of being heard with favor, or where at worst the sentence will be only private whipping.

I believe the reader would wish to find no substance in a doctrine which has a tendency to destroy all test of character as deduced from conduct. He will therefore excuse my adding something more, towards the further clearing up a point which the great convenience of obscurity to dishonesty has been able to cover with some degree of darkness and doubt.

In order to throw an odium on political connection, these politicians suppose it a necessary incident to it that you are blindly to follow the opinions of your party, when in direct opposition to your own clear ideas; a degree of servitude that no worthy man could bear the thought of submitting to, and such as, I believe, no connections (except some court factions) ever could be so senselessly tyrannical as to impose. Men thinking freely will, in particular instances, think differently. But still, as the greater part of the measures which arise in the course of public business are related to, or dependent on, some great *leading general principles in government*, a man must be peculiarly unfortunate in the choice of his political company if he does not agree with them at least nine times in ten. If he does not concur in these general principles upon which the party is founded, and which necessarily draw on a concurrence in their application, he ought from the beginning to have chosen some other, more conformable to his opinions. When the question is in its nature doubtful, or not very material, the modesty which becomes an individual, and (in spite of our court moralists) that partiality which becomes a well-chosen friendship, will frequently bring on an acquiescence in the general sentiment. Thus the disagreement will naturally be rare; it will be only enough to indulge freedom, without violating concord, or disturbing arrangement. And this is all that ever was required for a character of the greatest uniformity and steadiness in connection. How men can proceed without any connection at all, is to me utterly incomprehensible. Of what sort of materials must that man be made, — how must he be tempered and put together, who can sit whole years in Parliament, with five hundred and fifty of his fellow-citizens, amidst the storm of such tempestuous passions, in the sharp conflict of so many wits,

and tempers, and characters, in the agitation of such mighty questions, in the discussion of such vast and ponderous interests, without seeing any one sort of men, whose character, conduct, or disposition would lead him to associate himself with them, to aid and be aided, in any one system of public utility?

I remember an old scholastic aphorism, which says "that the man who lives wholly detached from others, must be either an angel or a devil." When I see in any of these detached gentlemen of our times the angelic purity, power, and beneficence, I shall admit them to be angels. In the mean time we are born only to be men. We shall do enough if we form ourselves to be good ones. It is therefore our business carefully to cultivate in our minds, to rear to the most perfect vigor and maturity, every sort of generous and honest feeling that belongs to our nature. To bring the dispositions that are lovely in private life into the service and conduct of the commonwealth; so to be patriots, as not to forget we are gentlemen. To cultivate friendships, and to incur enmities. To have both strong, but both selected; in the one, to be placable, — in the other, immovable. To model our principles to our duties and our situation. To be fully persuaded that all virtue which is impracticable is spurious; and rather to run the risk of falling into faults in a course which leads us to act with effect and energy, than to loiter out our days without blame and without use. Public life is a situation of power and energy; he trespasses against his duty who sleeps upon his watch, as well as he that goes over to the enemy. . . .

## REFLECTIONS ON THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

1790

[On the anniversary of the landing of the Prince of Orange in the Revolution of 1688, the members of the Revolution Society listened to a sermon (Nov. 4, 1789) in the Meeting-house in the Old Jewry, preached by Dr. Richard Price, a nonconformist divine, who expressed great admiration for the leaders of the Revolution in France (see Burke's quotation from the sermon, page 581, below). This aroused Burke, who had from the first been hostile to the Revolution, and for a year he labored on a reply, which came out as the *Reflections*, addressed to a French gentleman, M. Dupont, who had asked his opinion of the Revolution. The book went through eleven editions within a year, and created an extraordinary sensation. The famous passage on Marie Antoinette (page 588) was ridiculed by Francis as "pure foppery," but Burke declared that the "tears came again into my

eyes, almost as often as I looked at the description; they may again. . . . My friend, I tell you it is truth, and that it is true, and will be true, when you and I are no more." The *Reflections* are not divided into sections; the extracts here reproduced will be found in the Bohn Library Edition of Burke's Works, vol. II, pp. 331-352. For Paine's reply, see pages 616-23, below.]

. . . FAR am I from denying in theory, full as far is my heart from withholding in practice (if I were of power to give or to withhold), the *real* rights of men. In denying their false claims of right, I do not mean to injure those which are real and are such as their pretended rights would totally destroy. If civil society be made for the advantage of man, all the advantages for which it is made become his right. It is an institution of beneficence, and law itself is only beneficence acting by a rule. Men have a right to live by that rule; they have a right to justice, as between their fellows, whether their fellows are in politic function or in ordinary occupation. They have a right to the fruits of their industry, and to the means of making their industry fruitful. They have a right to the acquisitions of their parents; to the nourishment and improvement of their offspring; to instruction in life, and to consolation in death. Whatever each man can separately do, without trespassing upon others, he has a right to do for himself; and he has a right to a fair portion of all which society, with all its combinations of skill and force, can do in his favor. In this partnership all men have equal rights, but not to equal things. He that has but five shillings in the partnership, has as good a right to it as he that has five hundred pounds has to his larger proportion. But he has not a right to an equal dividend in the product of the joint stock; and as to the share of power, authority, and direction which each individual ought to have in the management of the state, that I must deny to be amongst the direct original rights of man in civil society; for I have in my contemplation the civil social man, and no other. It is a thing to be settled by convention.

If civil society be the offspring of convention, that convention must be its law. That convention must limit and modify all the descriptions of constitution which are formed under it. Every sort of legislative, judicial, or executory power are its creatures. They can have no being in any other state of things; and how can any man claim, under the conventions of civil society,



rights which do not so much as suppose its existence? rights which are absolutely repugnant to it? One of the first motives to civil society, and which becomes one of its fundamental rules, is *that no man should be judge in his own cause*. By this each person has at once divested himself of the first fundamental right of uncovenanted man, that is, to judge for himself, and to assert his own cause. He abdicates all right to be his own governor. He inclusively, in a great measure, abandons the right of self-defense, the first law of nature. Men cannot enjoy the rights of an uncivil and of a civil state together. That he may obtain justice, he gives up his right of determining what it is in points the most essential to him. That he may secure some liberty, he makes a surrender in trust of the whole of it.

Government is not made in virtue of natural rights, which may and do exist in total independence of it, and exist in much greater clearness, and in a much greater degree of abstract perfection; but their abstract perfection is their practical defect. By having a right to everything they want everything. Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human *wants*. Men have a right that these wants should be provided for by this wisdom. Among these wants is to be reckoned the want, out of civil society, of a sufficient restraint upon their passions. Society requires not only that the passions of individuals should be subjected, but that even in the mass and body, as well as in the individuals, the inclinations of men should frequently be thwarted, their will controlled, and their passions brought into subjection. This can only be done *by a power out of themselves*, and not, in the exercise of its function, subject to that will and to those passions which it is its office to bridle and subdue. In this sense the restraints on men, as well as their liberties, are to be reckoned amongst their rights. But as the liberties and the restrictions vary with times and circumstances, and admit of infinite modifications, they cannot be settled upon any abstract rule; and nothing is so foolish as to discuss them upon that principle.

The moment you abate anything from the full rights of men each to govern himself, and suffer any artificial, positive limitation upon those rights, from that moment the whole organization of government becomes a consideration of convenience.

This it is which makes the constitution of a state, and the due distribution of its powers, a matter of the most delicate and complicated skill. It requires a deep knowledge of human nature and human necessities, and of the things which facilitate or obstruct the various ends which are to be pursued by the mechanism of civil institutions. The state is to have recruits to its strength, and remedies to its distempers. What is the use of discussing a man's abstract right to food or medicine? The question is upon the method of procuring and administering them. In that deliberation I shall always advise to call in the aid of the farmer and the physician, rather than the professor of metaphysics.

The science of constructing a commonwealth, or renovating it, or reforming it, is, like every other experimental science, not to be taught *a priori*. Nor is it a short experience that can instruct us in that practical science; because the real effects of moral causes are not always immediate; but that which in the first instance is prejudicial may be excellent in its remoter operation, and its excellence may arise even from the ill effects it produces in the beginning. The reverse also happens; and very plausible schemes, with very pleasing commencements, have often shameful and lamentable conclusions. In states there are often some obscure and almost latent causes, things which appear at first view of little moment, on which a very great part of its prosperity or adversity may most essentially depend. The science of government being therefore so practical in itself, and intended for such practical purposes, a matter which requires experience, and even more experience than any person can gain in his whole life, however sagacious and observing he may be, — it is with infinite caution that any man ought to venture upon pulling down an edifice which has answered in any tolerable degree for ages the common purposes of society, or on building it up again without having models and patterns of approved utility before his eyes.

These metaphysic rights, entering into common life like rays of light which pierce into a dense medium, are, by the laws of nature, refracted from their straight line. Indeed in the gross and complicated mass of human passions and concerns, the primitive rights of men undergo such a variety of refractions and reflections, that it becomes absurd to talk of them as

if they continued in the simplicity of their original direction. The nature of man is intricate; the objects of society are of the greatest possible complexity: and therefore no simple disposition or direction of power can be suitable either to man's nature, or to the quality of his affairs. When I hear the simplicity of contrivance aimed at and boasted of in any new political constitutions, I am at no loss to decide that the artificers are grossly ignorant of their trade, or totally negligent of their duty. The simple governments are fundamentally defective, to say no worse of them. If you were to contemplate society in but one point of view, all these simple modes of polity are infinitely captivating. In effect each would answer its single end much more perfectly than the more complex is able to attain all its complex purposes. But it is better that the whole should be imperfectly and anomalously answered, than that, while some parts are provided for with great exactness, others might be totally neglected, or perhaps materially injured, by the over-care of a favorite member.

The pretended rights of these theorists are all extremes; and in proportion as they are metaphysically true, they are morally and politically false. The rights of men are in a sort of *middle*, incapable of definition, but not impossible to be discerned. The rights of men in governments are their advantages; and these are often in balances between differences of good, in compromises sometimes between good and evil, and sometimes between evil and evil. Political reason is a computing principle; adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing, morally, and not metaphysically or mathematically, true moral denominations.

By these theorists the right of the people is almost always sophistically confounded with their power. The body of the community, whenever it can come to act, can meet with no effectual resistance; but till power and right are the same, the whole body of them has no right inconsistent with virtue, and the first of all virtues, prudence. Men have no right to what is not reasonable, and to what is not for their benefit; for though a pleasant writer said, *Liceat perire poetis*,<sup>1</sup> when one of them, in cold blood, is said to have leaped into the flames of a volcanic revolution, *Ardentem frigidus Ætnam insiluit*,<sup>2</sup> I consider such

<sup>1</sup> "Poets have a right to perish."

<sup>2</sup> [Empedocles,] himself "cold [with age?], leaped into burning Ætna."



a frolic rather as an unjustifiable poetic license than as one of the franchises of Parnassus; and whether he were poet, or divine, or politician, that chose to exercise this kind of right, I think that more wise, because more charitable, thoughts would urge me rather to save the man than to preserve his brazen slippers as the monuments of his folly. . . .

Plots, massacres, assassinations, seem to some people a trivial price for obtaining a revolution. A cheap, bloodless reformation, a guiltless liberty, appear flat and vapid to their taste. There must be a great change of scene; there must be a magnificent stage effect; there must be a grand spectacle to rouse the imagination, grown torpid with the lazy enjoyment of sixty years' security, and the still unanimating repose of public prosperity. The preacher found them all in the French Revolution. This inspires a juvenile warmth through his whole frame. His enthusiasm kindles as he advances, and when he arrives at his peroration it is in a full blaze. Then viewing, from the Pisgah of his pulpit, the free, moral, happy, flourishing, and glorious state of France, as in a bird's-eye landscape of a promised land, he breaks out into the following rapture: —

“What an eventful period is this! I am *thankful* that I have lived to it; I could almost say, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* — I have lived to see a *diffusion* of knowledge, which has undermined superstition and error. — I have lived to see *the rights of men* better understood than ever, and nations panting for liberty which seemed to have lost the idea of it. — I have lived to see *thirty millions of people*, indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice; *their king led in triumph, and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects.*” . . .

I find a preacher of the Gospel profaning the beautiful and prophetic ejaculation, commonly called *Nunc dimittis*, made on the first presentation of our Saviour in the temple, and applying it, with an inhuman and unnatural rapture, to the most horrid, atrocious, and afflicting spectacle that perhaps ever was exhibited to the pity and indignation of mankind. This “*leading in triumph*,” a thing in its best form unmanly and irreligious, which fills our preacher with such unhallowed transports, must shock, I believe, the moral taste of every well-born mind. Sev-

eral English were the stupefied and indignant spectators of that triumph. It was (unless we have been strangely deceived) a spectacle more resembling a procession of American savages, entering into Onondaga after some of their murders called victories, and leading into hovels hung round with scalps their captives, overpowered with the scoffs and buffets of women as ferocious as themselves, much more than it resembled the triumphal pomp of a civilized martial nation;—if a civilized nation, or any men who had a sense of generosity, were capable of a personal triumph over the fallen and afflicted.

This, my dear Sir, was not the triumph of France. I must believe that, as a nation, it overwhelmed you with shame and horror. I must believe that the National Assembly find themselves in a state of the greatest humiliation in not being able to punish the authors of this triumph, or the actors in it; and that they are in a situation in which any inquiry they may make upon the subject must be destitute even of the appearance of liberty or impartiality. The apology of that assembly is found in their situation; but when we approve what they *must* bear, it is in us the degenerate choice of a vitiated mind.

With a compelled appearance of deliberation, they vote under the dominion of a stern necessity. They sit in the heart, as it were, of a foreign republic; they have their residence in a city whose constitution has emanated neither from the charter of their king nor from their legislative power. They are surrounded by an army not raised either by the authority of their crown or by their command, and which, if they should order to dissolve itself, would instantly dissolve them. There they sit, after a gang of assassins had driven away some hundreds of the members; whilst those who held the same moderate principles, with more patience or better hope, continued every day exposed to outrageous insults and murderous threats. There a majority, sometimes real, sometimes pretended, captive itself, compels a captive king to issue as royal edicts, at third hand, the polluted nonsense of their most licentious and giddy coffee-houses. It is notorious that all their measures are decided before they are debated. It is beyond doubt that, under the terror of the bayonet, and the lamp-post, and the torch to their houses, they are obliged to adopt all the crude and desperate measures suggested by clubs composed of a monstrous medley of all condi-

tions, tongues, and nations. Among these are found persons in comparison of whom Catiline would be thought scrupulous, and Cethegus a man of sobriety and moderation. Nor is it in these clubs alone that the public measures are deformed into monsters. They undergo a previous distortion in academies, intended as so many seminaries for these clubs, which are set up in all the places of public resort. In these meetings of all sorts, every counsel, in proportion as it is daring, and violent, and perfidious, is taken for the mark of superior genius. Humanity and compassion are ridiculed as the fruits of superstition and ignorance. Tenderness to individuals is considered as treason to the public. Liberty is always to be estimated perfect as property is rendered insecure. Amidst assassination, massacre, and confiscation, perpetrated or meditated, they are forming plans for the good order of future society. Embracing in their arms the carcasses of base criminals, and promoting their relations on the title of their offenses, they drive hundreds of virtuous persons to the same end, by forcing them to subsist by beggary or by crime.

The Assembly, their organ, acts before them the farce of deliberation with as little decency as liberty. They act like the comedians of a fair before a riotous audience; they act amidst the tumultuous cries of a mixed mob of ferocious men, and of women lost to shame, who, according to their insolent fancies, direct, control, applaud, explode them, and sometimes mix and take their seats amongst them, domineering over them with a strange mixture of servile petulance and proud, presumptuous authority. As they have inverted order in all things, the gallery is in the place of the house. This assembly, which overthrows kings and kingdoms, has not even the physiognomy and aspect of a grave legislative body — *nec color imperii, nec frons erat ulla senatus*.<sup>1</sup> They have a power given to them, like that of the evil principle, to subvert and destroy; but none to construct, except such machines as may be fitted for further subversion and further destruction.

Who is it that admires, and from the heart is attached to, national representative assemblies, but must turn with horror and disgust from such a profane burlesque and abominable perversion of that sacred institute? Lovers of monarchy, lovers of re-

<sup>1</sup> "There was neither the complexion of empire nor any appearance of a senate."



publics, must alike abhor it. The members of your Assembly must themselves groan under the tyranny of which they have all the shame, none of the direction, and little of the profit. I am sure many of the members who compose even the majority of that body must feel as I do, notwithstanding the applauses of the Revolution Society. Miserable king! miserable assembly! How must that assembly be silently scandalized with those of their members who could call a day which seemed to blot the sun out of the heavens, "*un beau jour*"! How must they be inwardly indignant at hearing others, who thought fit to declare to them "that the vessel of the state would fly forward in her course towards regeneration with more speed than ever," from the stiff gale of treason and murder which preceded our preacher's triumph! What must they have felt, whilst, with outward patience and inward indignation, they heard of the slaughter of innocent gentlemen in their houses, that "the blood spilled was not the most pure"! What must they have felt, when they were besieged by complaints of disorder which shook their country to its foundations, at being compelled coolly to tell the complainants that they were under the protection of the law, and that they would address the king (the captive king) to cause the laws to be enforced for their protection; when the enslaved ministers of that captive king had formally notified to them that there was neither law, nor authority, nor power left to protect! What they must have felt at being obliged, as a felicitation on the present new year, to request their captive king to forget the stormy period of the last, on account of the great good which ~~he~~ was likely to produce to his people; to the complete attainment of which good they adjourned the practical demonstrations of their loyalty, assuring him of their obedience, when he should no longer possess any authority to command!

This address was made with much good-nature and affection, to be sure. But among the revolutions in France must be reckoned a considerable revolution in their ideas of politeness. In England we are said to learn manners at second-hand from your side of the water, and that we dress our behavior in the frippery of France. If so, we are still in the old cut, and have not so far conformed to the new Parisian mode of good breeding as to think it quite in the most refined strain of delicate compliment (whether in condolence or congratulation) to say, to the most

humiliated creature that crawls upon the earth, that great public benefits are derived from the murder of his servants, the attempted assassination of himself and of his wife, and the mortification, disgrace, and degradation that he has personally suffered. It is a topic of consolation which our ordinary of Newgate would be too humane to use to a criminal at the foot of the gallows. I should have thought that the hangman of Paris, now that he is liberalized by the vote of the National Assembly, and is allowed his rank and arms in the Heralds' College of the Rights of Men, would be too generous, too gallant a man, too full of the sense of his new dignity, to employ that cutting consolation to any of the persons whom the *lèse nation* might bring under the administration of his *executive power*.

A man is fallen indeed, when he is thus flattered. The anodyne draught of oblivion, thus drugged, is well calculated to preserve a galling wakefulness, and to feed the living ulcer of a corroding memory. Thus to administer the opiate potion of amnesty, powdered with all the ingredients of scorn and contempt, is to hold to his lips, instead of "the balm of hurt minds," the cup of human misery full to the brim, and to force him to drink it to the dregs.

Yielding to reasons at least as forcible as those which were so delicately urged in the compliment on the new year, the king of France will probably endeavor to forget these events and that compliment. But History, who keeps a durable record of all our acts, and exercises her awful censure over the proceedings of all sorts of sovereigns, will not forget either those events or the era of this liberal refinement in the intercourse of mankind. History will record that, on the morning of the 6th of October, 1789, the King and Queen of France, after a day of confusion, alarm, dismay, and slaughter, lay down, under the pledged security of public faith, to indulge nature in a few hours of respite, and troubled, melancholy repose. From this sleep the queen was first startled by the voice of the sentinel at her door, who cried out to her to save herself by flight — that this was the last proof of fidelity he could give — that they were upon him, and he was dead. Instantly he was cut down. A band of cruel ruffians and assassins, reeking with his blood, rushed into the chamber of the queen, and pierced with a hundred strokes of bayonets and poniards the bed, from whence

this persecuted woman had but just time to fly almost naked, and, through ways unknown to the murderers, had escaped to seek refuge at the feet of a king and husband, not secure of his own life for a moment.

This king, to say no more of him, and this queen, and their infant children, who once would have been the pride and hope of a great and generous people, were then forced to abandon the sanctuary of the most splendid palace in the world, which they left swimming in blood, polluted by massacre, and strewn with scattered limbs and mutilated carcases. Thence they were conducted into the capital of their kingdom. Two had been selected from the unprovoked, unresisted, promiscuous slaughter which was made of the gentlemen of birth and family who composed the king's body-guard. These two gentlemen, with all the parade of an execution of justice, were cruelly and publicly dragged to the block, and beheaded in the great court of the palace. Their heads were stuck upon spears, and led the procession; whilst the royal captives who followed in the train were slowly moved along, amidst the horrid yells, and shrilling screams, and frantic dances, and infamous contumelies, and all the unutterable abominations of the furies of hell, in the abused shape of the vilest of women. After they had been made to taste, drop by drop, more than the bitterness of death, in the slow torture of a journey of twelve miles, protracted to six hours, they were, under a guard composed of those very soldiers who had thus conducted them through this famous triumph, lodged in one of the old palaces of Paris, now converted into a Bastille for kings.

Is this a triumph to be consecrated at altars? to be commemorated with grateful thanksgiving, to be offered to the Divine Humanity with fervent prayer and enthusiastic ejaculation? — These Theban and Thracian orgies, acted in France, and applauded only in the Old Jewry, I assure you, kindle prophetic enthusiasm in the minds but of very few people in this kingdom; although a saint and apostle, who may have revelations of his own, and who has so completely vanquished all the mean superstitions of the heart, may incline to think it pious and decorous to compare it with the entrance into the world of the Prince of Peace, proclaimed in an holy temple by a venerable sage, and not long before not worse announced by the voice of angels to the quiet innocence of shepherds. . . .



Although this work of our new light and knowledge did not go to the length that in all probability it was intended it should be carried, yet I must think that such treatment of any human creatures must be shocking to any but those who are made for accomplishing revolutions. But I cannot stop here. Influenced by the inborn feelings of my nature, and not being illuminated by a single ray of this new-sprung modern light, I confess to you, Sir, that the exalted rank of the persons suffering, and particularly the sex, the beauty, and the amiable qualities of the descendant of so many kings and emperors, with the tender age of royal infants, insensible only through infancy and innocence of the cruel outrages to which their parents were exposed, instead of being a subject of exultation, adds not a little to my sensibility on that most melancholy occasion.

I hear that the august person who was the principal object of our preacher's triumph, though he supported himself, felt much on that shameful occasion. As a man, it became him to feel for his wife and his children, and the faithful guards of his person, that were massacred in cold blood about him; as a prince, it became him to feel for the strange and frightful transformation of his civilized subjects, and to be more grieved for them than solicitous for himself. It derogates little from his fortitude, while it adds infinitely to the honor of his humanity. I am very sorry to say it, very sorry indeed, that such personages are in a situation in which it is not becoming in us to praise the virtues of the great.

I hear, and I rejoice to hear, that the great lady, the other object of the triumph, has borne that day (one is interested that beings made for suffering should suffer well), and that she bears all the succeeding days, — that she bears the imprisonment of her husband, and her own captivity, and the exile of her friends, and the insulting adulation of addresses, and the whole weight of her accumulated wrongs, with a serene patience, in a manner suited to her rank and race, and becoming the offspring of a sovereign distinguished for her piety and her courage; that, like her, she has lofty sentiments; that she feels with the dignity of a Roman matron; that in the last extremity she will save herself from the last disgrace; and that, if she must fall, she will fall by no ignoble hand.

It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the Queen of

France, then the Dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in, — glittering like the morning-star, full of life and splendor and joy. Oh! what a revolution! and what a heart must I have to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall! Little did I dream, when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom; little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honor, and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever. Never, never more shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defense of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise, is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honor, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness.

This mixed system of opinion and sentiment had its origin in the ancient chivalry; and the principle, though varied in its appearance by the varying state of human affairs, subsisted and influenced through a long succession of generations, even to the time we live in. If it should ever be totally extinguished, the loss, I fear, will be great. It is this which has given its character to modern Europe. It is this which has distinguished it under all its forms of government, and distinguished it to its advantage, from the states of Asia, and possibly from those states which flourished in the most brilliant periods of the antique world. It was this which, without confounding ranks, had produced a noble equality, and handed it down through all the gradations of social life. It was this opinion which miti-

gated kings into companions, and raised private men to be fellows with kings. Without force or opposition, it subdued the fierceness of pride and power; it obliged sovereigns to submit to the soft collar of social esteem, compelled stern authority to submit to elegance, and gave a dominating vanquisher of laws to be subdued by manners.

But now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions which made power gentle and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life, and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the superadded ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our naked, shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.

On this scheme of things, a king is but a man, a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal, and an animal not of the highest order. All homage paid to the sex in general as such, and without distinct views, is to be regarded as romance and folly. Regicide, and parricide, and sacrilege are but fictions of superstition, corrupting jurisprudence by destroying its simplicity. The murder of a king, or a queen, or a bishop, or a father are only common homicide; and if the people are by any chance, or in any way, gainers by it, a sort of homicide much the most pardonable, and into which we ought not to make too severe a scrutiny.

On the scheme of this barbarous philosophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings, and which is as void of solid wisdom as it is destitute of all taste and elegance, laws are to be supported only by their own terrors, and by the concern which each individual may find in them from his own private speculations, or can spare to them from his own private interests. In the groves of *their* academy, at the end of every vista, you see nothing but the gallows. Nothing is left which engages the affections on the part of the commonwealth. On the principles of this mechanic philosophy, our institutions can never be embodied, if I may use the expression, in persons,



so as to create in us love, veneration, admiration, or attachment. But that sort of reason which banishes the affections is incapable of filling their place. These public affections, combined with manners, are required sometimes as supplements, sometimes as correctives, always as aids to law. The precept given by a wise man, as well as a great critic, for the construction of poems, is equally true as to states: *Non satis est pulchra esse poemata, dulcia sunt.*<sup>1</sup> There ought to be a system of manners in every nation, which a well-formed mind would be disposed to relish. To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely.

But power, of some kind or other, will survive the shock in which manners and opinions perish; and it will find other and worse means for its support. The usurpation which, in order to subvert ancient institutions, has destroyed ancient principles, will hold power by arts similar to those by which it has acquired it. When the old feudal and chivalrous spirit of *fealty*, which, by freeing kings from fear, freed both kings and subjects from the precautions of tyranny, shall be extinct in the minds of men, plots and assassinations will be anticipated by preventive murder and preventive confiscation, and that long roll of grim and bloody maxims, which form the political code of all power not standing on its own honor and the honor of those who are to obey it. Kings will be tyrants from policy, when subjects are rebels from principle.

When ancient opinions and rules of life are taken away, the loss cannot possibly be estimated. From that moment we have no compass to govern us; nor can we know distinctly to what port we steer. Europe, undoubtedly, taken in a mass, was in a flourishing condition the day on which your revolution was completed. How much of that prosperous state was owing to the spirit of our old manners and opinions is not easy to say; but as such causes cannot be indifferent in their operation, we must presume that, on the whole, their operation was beneficial.

We are but too apt to consider things in the state in which we find them, without sufficiently adverting to the causes by which they have been produced, and possibly may be upheld. Nothing is more certain than that our manners, our civiliza-

<sup>1</sup> "It does not suffice that poems should be beautiful; they must be charming." — HORACE.

tion, and all the good things which are connected with manners and with civilization, have, in this European world of ours, depended for ages upon two principles, and were indeed the result of both combined: I mean the spirit of a gentleman, and the spirit of religion. The nobility and the clergy, the one by profession, the other by patronage, kept learning in existence, even in the midst of arms and confusions, and whilst governments were rather in their causes than formed. Learning paid back what it received to nobility and to priesthood, and paid it with usury, by enlarging their ideas and by furnishing their minds. Happy if they had all continued to know their indissoluble union, and their proper place! Happy if learning, not debauched by ambition, had been satisfied to continue the instructor, and not aspired to be the master! Along with its natural protectors and guardians, learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude.

If, as I suspect, modern letters owe more than they are always willing to own to ancient manners, so do other interests which we value full as much as they are worth. Even commerce, and trade, and manufacture, the gods of our economical politicians, are themselves perhaps but creatures; are themselves but effects, which, as first causes, we choose to worship. They certainly grew under the same shade in which learning flourished. They too may decay with their natural protecting principles. With you, for the present at least, they all threaten to disappear together. Where trade and manufactures are wanting to a people, and the spirit of nobility and religion remains, sentiment supplies, and not always ill supplies, their place; but if commerce and the arts should be lost in an experiment to try how well a state may stand without these old fundamental principles, what sort of a thing must be a nation of gross, stupid, ferocious, and at the same time poor and sordid, barbarians, destitute of religion, honor, or manly pride, possessing nothing at present, and hoping for nothing hereafter?

I wish you may not be going fast, and by the shortest cut, to that horrible and disgustful situation. Already there appears a poverty of conception, a coarseness and vulgarity, in all the proceedings of the Assembly and of all their instructors. Their liberty is not liberal. Their science is presumptuous ignorance. Their humanity is savage and brutal.

It is not clear whether in England we learned those grand and decorous principles and manners, of which considerable traces yet remain, from you, or whether you took them from us. But to you, I think, we trace them best. You seem to me to be *gentis incunabula nostræ*.<sup>1</sup> France has always more or less influenced manners in England; and when your fountain is choked up and polluted, the stream will not run long, or not run clear, with us, or perhaps with any nation. This gives all Europe, in my opinion, but too close and connected a concern in what is done in France. Excuse me, therefore, if I have dwelt too long on the atrocious spectacle of the 6th of October, 1789, or have given too much scope to the reflections which have arisen in my mind on occasion of the most important of all revolutions, which may be dated from that day, — I mean a revolution in sentiments, manners, and moral opinions. As things now stand, with everything respectable destroyed without us, and an attempt to destroy within us every principle of respect, one is almost forced to apologize for harboring the common feelings of men. . . .

## A LETTER FROM THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE, TO A NOBLE LORD

ON THE ATTACKS MADE UPON HIM AND HIS PENSION, IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, BY THE DUKE OF BEDFORD AND THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE, EARLY IN THE PRESENT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT

1796

[In 1794 the Government proposed to make Burke a peer, in recognition of his long services to the state, but on the death of his son, which left him childless, the project was abandoned, and instead a pension of £3700 a year was conferred by the Crown. "By and by, when the resentment of the Opposition was roused to the highest pitch by the infamous Treason and Sedition bills of 1795, the Duke of Bedford and Lord Lauderdale, seeking to accumulate every possible complaint against the Government, assailed the grant to Burke, as made without the consent of Parliament, and as a violent contradiction to the whole policy of the plan for economic reform. The attack, if not justifiable in itself, came from an unlucky quarter. A chief of the house of Bedford was the most unfit person in the world to protest against grants by favor of the Crown. Burke was too

<sup>1</sup> "The cradle of our race."



practiced a rhetorician not to see the opening, and his *Letter to a Noble Lord* is the most splendid repartee in the English language." (Morley: *Burke*, p. 198.)]

. . . ASTRONOMERS have supposed that if a certain comet, whose path intersected the ecliptic, had met the earth in some (I forget what) sign, it would have whirled us along with it, in its eccentric course, into God knows what regions of heat and cold. Had the portentous comet of the Rights of Man, which "from its horrid hair shakes pestilence and war," and "with fear of change perplexes monarchs," — had that comet crossed upon us in that internal state of England, nothing human could have prevented our being irresistibly hurried out of the highway of heaven, into all the vices, crimes, horrors, and miseries of the French Revolution.

Happily, France was not then Jacobinized. Her hostility was at a good distance. We had a limb cut off, but we preserved the body. We lost our colonies, but we kept our constitution. There was, indeed, much intestine heat; there was a dreadful fermentation. Wild and savage insurrection quitted the woods, and prowled about our streets in the name of Reform. Such was the distemper of the public mind that there was no madman, in his maddest ideas and maddest projects, who might not count upon numbers to support his principles and execute his designs.

Many of the changes, by a great misnomer called parliamentary reforms, went, not in the intention of all the professors and supporters of them, undoubtedly, but went in their certain, and, in my opinion, not very remote effect, home to the utter destruction of the constitution of this kingdom. Had they taken place, not France, but England, would have had the honor of leading up the death-dance of democratic revolution. Other projects, exactly coincident in time with those, struck at the very existence of the kingdom under any constitution. There are who remember the blind fury of some, and the lamentable helplessness of others; here, a torpid confusion, from a panic fear of the danger; there, the same inaction from a stupid insensibility to it; here, well-wishers to the mischief; there, indifferent lookers-on. At the same time, a sort of national convention, dubious in its nature, and perilous in its example, nosed Parliament in the very seat of its authority, sat with a sort of superintendence over it, and little less than dic-

tated to it, not only laws, but the very form and essence of legislature itself. In Ireland things ran in a still more eccentric course. Government was unnerved, confounded, and in a manner suspended. Its equipoise was totally gone. I do not mean to speak disrespectfully of Lord North. He was a man of admirable parts, of general knowledge, of a versatile understanding fitted for every sort of business, of infinite wit and pleasantry, of a delightful temper, and with a mind most perfectly disinterested. But it would be only to degrade myself by a weak adulation, and not to honor the memory of a great man, to deny that he wanted something of the vigilance and spirit of command, that the time required. Indeed a darkness, next to the fog of this awful day, lowered over the whole region. For a little time the helm appeared abandoned —

*Ipse diem noctemque negat discernere cælo,  
Nec meminisse viæ media Palinurus in unda.*<sup>1</sup>

At that time I was connected with men of high place in the community. They loved liberty as much as the Duke of Bedford can do, and they understood it at least as well. Perhaps their politics, as usual, took a tincture from their character, and they cultivated what they loved. The liberty they pursued was a liberty inseparable from order, from virtue, from morals, and from religion, and was neither hypocritically nor fanatically followed. They did not wish that liberty, in itself one of the first of blessings, should in its perversion become the greatest curse which could fall upon mankind. To preserve the constitution entire, and practically equal to all the great ends of its formation, not in one single part, but in all its parts, was to them the first object. Popularity and power they regarded alike. These were with them only different means of obtaining that object, and had no preference over each other in their minds, but as one or the other might afford a surer or a less certain prospect of arriving at that end. It is some consolation to me, in the cheerless gloom which darkens the evening of my life, that with them I commenced my political career, and never for a moment, in reality nor in appearance, for any length of time, was separated from their good wishes and good opinion.

By what accident it matters not, nor upon what desert, but

<sup>1</sup> "Palinurus himself says he cannot distinguish night from day, nor remember the way in the midst of the ocean."

just then, and in the midst of that hunt of obloquy which ever has pursued me with a full cry through life, I had obtained a very considerable degree of public confidence. I know well enough how equivocal a test this kind of popular opinion forms of the merit that obtained it. I am no stranger to the insecurity of its tenure. I do not boast of it. It is mentioned to show, not how highly I prize the thing, but my right to value the use I made of it. I endeavored to turn that short-lived advantage to myself into a permanent benefit to my country. Far am I from detracting from the merit of some gentlemen, out of office or in it, on that occasion. No! — It is not my way to refuse a full and heaped measure of justice to the aids that I receive. I have, through life, been willing to give everything to others, and to reserve nothing for myself but the inward conscience that I had omitted no pains to discover, to animate, to discipline, to direct the abilities of the country for its service, and to place them in the best light to improve their age, or to adorn it. This conscience I have. I have never suppressed any man, never checked him for a moment in his course, by any jealousy or by any policy. I was always ready, to the height of my means (and they were always infinitely below my desires), to forward those abilities which overpowered my own. He is an ill-furnished undertaker who has no machinery but his own hands to work with. Poor in my own faculties, I ever thought myself rich in theirs. In that period of difficulty and danger more especially, I consulted and sincerely coöperated with men of all parties who seemed disposed to the same ends, or to any main part of them. Nothing to prevent disorder was omitted; when it appeared, nothing to subdue it was left uncounseled nor unexecuted, as far as I could prevail. At the time I speak of, and having a momentary lead, so aided and so encouraged, and as a feeble instrument in a mighty hand, — I do not say I saved my country; I am sure I did my country important service. There were few, indeed, that did not at that time acknowledge it; and that time was thirteen years ago. It was but one voice, that no man in the kingdom better deserved an honorable provision should be made for him.

So much for my general conduct through the whole of the portentous crisis from 1780 to 1782, and the general sense then entertained of that conduct by my country. But my character



as a reformer, in the particular instances which the Duke of Bedford refers to, is so connected in principle with my opinions on the hideous changes which have since barbarized France, and, spreading thence, threatened the political and moral order of the whole world, that it seems to demand something of a more detailed discussion.

My economical reforms were not, as his Grace may think, the suppression of a paltry pension or employment, more or less. Economy in my plans was, as it ought to be, secondary, subordinate, instrumental. I acted on state principles. I found a great distemper in the commonwealth, and, according to the nature of the evil and of the object, I treated it. The malady was deep; it was complicated, in the causes and in the symptoms. Throughout it was full of contra-indicants. On one hand, government, daily growing more invidious from an apparent increase of the means of strength, was every day growing more contemptible by real weakness. Nor was this dissolution confined to government commonly so called. It extended to Parliament, which was losing not a little in its dignity and estimation, by an opinion of its not acting on worthy motives. On the other hand, the desires of the people (partly natural and partly infused into them by art) appeared in so wild and inconsiderate a manner, with regard to the economical object (for I set aside for a moment the dreadful tampering with the body of the constitution itself), that, if their petitions had literally been complied with, the state would have been convulsed, and a gate would have been opened through which all property might be sacked and ravaged. Nothing could have saved the public from the mischiefs of the false reform but its absurdity, which would soon have brought itself, and with it all real reform, into discredit. This would have left a rankling wound in the hearts of the people, who would know they had failed in the accomplishment of their wishes, but who, like the rest of mankind in all ages, would impute the blame to anything rather than to their own proceedings. But there were then persons in the world who nourished complaint, and would have been thoroughly disappointed if the people were ever satisfied. I was not of that humor. I wished that they *should* be satisfied. It was my aim to give to the people the substance of what I knew they desired, and what I thought was right, whether they desired it or

not, before it had been modified for them into senseless petitions. I knew that there is a manifest, marked distinction, which ill men with ill designs, or weak men incapable of any design, will constantly be confounding, — that is, a marked distinction between change and reformation. The former alters the substance of the objects themselves, and gets rid of all their essential good, as well as of all the accidental evil annexed to them. Change is novelty; and whether it is to operate any one of the effects of reformation at all, or whether it may not contradict the very principle upon which reformation is desired, cannot be certainly known beforehand. Reform is not a change in the substance, or in the primary modification, of the object, but a direct application of a remedy to the grievance complained of. So far as that is removed, all is sure. It stops there; and, if it fails, the substance which underwent the operation, at the very worst, is but where it was.

All this, in effect, I think, but am not sure, I have said elsewhere. It cannot at this time be too often repeated, — line upon line, precept upon precept, — until it comes into the currency of a proverb: *to innovate is not to reform*. The French revolutionists complained of everything; they refused to reform anything; and they left nothing, no, nothing at all *unchanged*. The consequences are *before us*, — not in remote history; not in future prognostication; — they are about us; they are upon us. They shake the public security; they menace private enjoyment. They dwarf the growth of the young; they break the quiet of the old. If we travel, they stop our way. They infest us in town; they pursue us to the country. Our business is interrupted; our repose is troubled; our pleasures are saddened, our very studies are poisoned and perverted, and knowledge is rendered worse than ignorance, by the enormous evils of this dreadful innovation. The revolution harpies of France, sprung from Night and Hell, or from that chaotic Anarchy which generates equivocally “all monstrous, all prodigious things,” cuckoo-like, adulterously lay their eggs, and brood over, and hatch them in the nest of every neighboring state. These obscene harpies, who deck themselves in I know not what divine attributes, but who in reality are foul and ravenous birds of prey (both mothers and daughters), flutter over our heads, and souse down upon our tables, and leave nothing unrent,

unrifled, unravaged, or unpolluted with the slime of their filthy offal. . . .

Does his Grace think that they who advised the Crown to make my retreat easy, considered me only as an economist? That, well understood, however, is a good deal. If I had not deemed it of some value, I should not have made political economy an object of my humble studies, from my very early youth to near the end of my service in Parliament, even before (at least to any knowledge of mine) it had employed the thoughts of speculative men in other parts of Europe. At that time it was still in its infancy in England, where, in the last century, it had its origin. Great and learned men thought my studies were not wholly thrown away, and deigned to communicate with me now and then on some particulars of their immortal works. Something of these studies may appear incidentally in some of the earliest things I published. The House has been witness to their effect, and has profited of them, more or less, for above eight-and-twenty years.

To their estimate I leave the matter. I was not, like his Grace of Bedford, swaddled, and rocked, and dandled into a legislator; "*Nitor in adversum*" is the motto of a man like me. I possessed not one of the qualities, nor cultivated one of the arts, that recommend men to the favor and protection of the great. I was not made for a minion or a tool. As little did I follow the trade of winning the hearts, by imposing on the understandings, of the people. At every step of my progress in life (for in every step was I traversed and opposed), and at every turnpike I met, I was obliged to show my passport, and again and again to prove my sole title to the honor of being useful to my country, by a proof that I was not wholly unacquainted with its laws and the whole system of its interests both abroad and at home. Otherwise no rank, no toleration even, for me. I had no arts but manly arts. On them I have stood, and, please God, in spite of the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Lauderdale, to the last gasp will I stand. . . .

The awful state of the time, and not myself, or my own justification, is my true object in what I now write, or in what I shall ever write or say. It little signifies to the world what becomes of such things as me, or even as the Duke of Bedford. What I say about either of us is nothing more than a vehicle, as



you, my Lord, will easily perceive, to convey my sentiments on matters far more worthy of your attention. It is when I stick to my apparent first subject that I ought to apologize, not when I depart from it. I therefore must beg your Lordship's pardon for again resuming it after this very short digression, — assuring you that I shall never altogether lose sight of such matter as persons abler than I am may turn to some profit.

The Duke of Bedford conceives that he is obliged to call the attention of the House of Peers to his Majesty's grant to me, which he considers as excessive, and out of all bounds.

I know not how it has happened, but it really seems that, whilst his Grace was meditating his well-considered censure upon me, he fell into a sort of sleep. Homer nods, and the Duke of Bedford may dream; and as dreams (even his golden dreams) are apt to be ill-pieced and incongruously put together, his Grace preserved his idea of reproach to *me*, but took the subject-matter from the crown grants to *his own family*. This is "the stuff of which his dreams are made." In that way of putting things together his Grace is perfectly in the right. The grants to the house of Russell were so enormous as not only to outrage economy, but even to stagger credibility. The Duke of Bedford is the leviathan among all the creatures of the Crown. He tumbles about his unwieldy bulk; he plays and frolics in the ocean of the royal bounty. Huge as he is, and whilst "he lies floating many a rood," he is still a creature. His ribs, his fins, his whalebone, his blubber, the very spiracles through which he spouts a torrent of brine against his origin, and covers me all over with the spray, — everything of him and about him is from the throne. Is it for *him* to question the dispensation of the royal favor?

I really am at a loss to draw any sort of parallel between the public merits of his Grace, by which he justifies the grants he holds, and these services of mine, on the favorable construction of which I have obtained what his Grace so much disapproves. In private life, I have not at all the honor of acquaintance with the noble Duke. But I ought to presume, and it costs me nothing to do so, that he abundantly deserves the esteem and love of all who live with him. But as to public service, why, truly it would not be more ridiculous for me to compare myself in rank, in fortune, in splendid descent, in youth,

strength, or figure, with the Duke of Bedford, than to make a parallel between his services and my attempts to be useful to my country. It would not be gross adulation, but uncivil irony, to say that he has any public merit of his own to keep alive the idea of the services by which his vast landed pensions were obtained. My merits, whatever they are, are original and personal; his are derivative. It is his ancestor, the original pensioner, that has laid up this inexhaustible fund of merit, which makes his Grace so very delicate and exceptious about the merit of all other grantees of the Crown. Had he permitted me to remain in quiet, I should have said, "'T is his estate; that's enough. It is his by law; what have I to do with it or its history?" He would naturally have said on his side, "'T is this man's fortune. He is as good now as my ancestor was two hundred and fifty years ago. I am a young man with very old pensions; he is an old man with very young pensions, — that's all."

Why will his Grace, by attacking me, force me reluctantly to compare my little merit with that which obtained from the Crown those prodigies of profuse donation by which he tramples on the mediocrity of humble and laborious individuals? I would willingly leave him to the Heralds' College, which the philosophy of the *sans-culottes* (prouder by far than all the Garters, and Norroys, and Clarencieux, and Rouge Dragons that ever pranced in a procession of what his friends call aristocrats and despots) will abolish with contumely and scorn. These historians, recorders, and blazoners of virtues and arms differ wholly from that other description of historians, who never assign any act of politicians to a good motive. These gentle historians, on the contrary, dip their pens in nothing but the milk of human kindness. They seek no further for merit than the preamble of a patent, or the inscription on a tomb. With them every man created a peer is first a hero ready-made. They judge of every man's capacity for office by the offices he has filled, and the more offices the more ability. Every general officer with them is a Marlborough; every statesman a Burleigh; every judge a Murray or a Yorke. They who, alive, were laughed at or pitied by all their acquaintance, make as good a figure as the best of them in the pages of Guillim, Edmondson, and Collins.

To these recorders, so full of good-nature to the great and

prosperous, I would willingly leave the first Baron Russell and Earl of Bedford, and the merits of his grants. But the aulnager, the weigher, the meter of grants, will not suffer us to acquiesce in the judgment of the prince reigning at the time when they were made. They are never good to those who earn them. Well, then, since the new grantees have war made on them by the old, and that the word of the sovereign is not to be taken, let us turn our eyes to history, in which great men have always a pleasure in contemplating the heroic origin of their house.

The first peer of the name, the first purchaser of the grants, was a Mr. Russell, a person of an ancient gentleman's family, raised by being a minion of Henry the Eighth. As there generally is some resemblance of character to create these relations, the favorite was in all likelihood much such another as his master. The first of those immoderate grants was not taken from the ancient demesne of the Crown, but from the recent confiscation of the ancient nobility of the land. The lion, having sucked the blood of his prey, threw the offal carcass to the jackal in waiting. Having tasted once the food of confiscation, the favorites became fierce and ravenous. This worthy favorite's first grant was from the lay nobility. The second, infinitely improving on the enormity of the first, was from the plunder of the Church. In truth his Grace is somewhat excusable for his dislike to a grant like mine, not only in its quantity but in its kind so different from his own.

Mine was from a mild and benevolent sovereign; his from Henry the Eighth.

Mine had not its fund in the murder of any innocent person of illustrious rank, or in the pillage of any body of unoffending men. His grants were from the aggregate and consolidated funds of judgments iniquitously legal, and from possessions voluntarily surrendered by the lawful proprietors, with the gibbet at their door.

The merit of the grantee whom he derives from was that of being a prompt and greedy instrument of a *leveling* tyrant, who oppressed all descriptions of his people, but who fell with particular fury on everything that was *great and noble*. Mine has been, in endeavoring to screen every man, in every class, from oppression, and particularly in defending the high and eminent, who in the bad times of confiscating princes, confiscating chief



governors, or confiscating demagogues, are the most exposed to jealousy, avarice, and envy.

The merit of the original grantee of his Grace's pensions was in giving his hand to the work and partaking the spoil, with a prince who plundered a part of the national church of his time and country. Mine was in defending the whole of the national church of my own time and my own country, and the whole of the national churches of all countries, from the principles and the examples which lead to ecclesiastical pillage, — thence to a contempt of *all* prescriptive titles, thence to the pillage of *all* property, and thence to universal desolation.

The merit of the origin of his Grace's fortune was in being a favorite and chief adviser to a prince who left no liberty to their native country. My endeavor was to obtain liberty for the municipal country in which I was born, and for all descriptions and denominations in it. Mine was to support with unrelaxing vigilance every right, every privilege, every franchise, in this my adopted, my dearer, and more comprehensive country; and not only to preserve those rights in this chief seat of empire, but in every nation, in every land, in every climate, language, and religion, in the vast domain that is still under the protection, and the larger that was once under the protection, of the British Crown.

His founder's merits were, by arts in which he served his master and made his fortune, to bring poverty, wretchedness, and depopulation on his country. Mine were, under a benevolent prince, in promoting the commerce, manufactures, and agriculture of his kingdom; in which his Majesty shows an eminent example, who even in his amusements is a patriot, and in hours of leisure an improver of his native soil.

His founder's merit was the merit of a gentleman raised by the arts of a court, and the protection of a Wolsey, to the eminence of a great and potent lord. His merit in that eminence was, by instigating a tyrant to injustice, to provoke a people to rebellion. My merit was, to awaken the sober part of the country, that they might put themselves on their guard against any one potent lord, or any greater number of potent lords, or any combination of great leading men of any sort, if ever they should attempt to proceed in the same courses, but in the reverse order, — that is, by instigating a corrupted populace to

rebellion, and, through that rebellion, introducing a tyranny yet worse than the tyranny which his Grace's ancestor supported, and of which he profited in the manner we behold in the despotism of Henry the Eighth.

The political merit of the first pensioner of his Grace's house was that of being concerned as a counselor of state in advising, and in his person executing, the conditions of a dishonorable peace with France; the surrendering the fortress of Boulogne, then our out-guard on the Continent. By that surrender, Calais, the key of France, and the bridle in the mouth of that power, was, not many years afterwards, finally lost. My merit has been in resisting the power and pride of France, under any form of its rule, but in opposing it with the greatest zeal and earnestness, when that rule appeared in the worst form it could assume, — the worst, indeed, which the prime cause and principle of all evil could possibly give it. It was my endeavor by every means to excite a spirit in the House where I had the honor of a seat, for carrying on, with early vigor and decision, the most clearly just and necessary war that this or any nation ever carried on, in order to save my country from the iron yoke of its power, and from the more dreadful contagion of its principles; to preserve, while they can be preserved, pure and untainted, the ancient, inbred integrity, piety, good nature, and good humor of the people of England, from the dreadful pestilence which, beginning in France, threatens to lay waste the whole moral, and in a great degree the whole physical world, having done both in the focus of its most intense malignity.

The labors of his Grace's founder merited the curses, not loud but deep, of the Commons of England, on whom *he* and his master had effected a *complete parliamentary reform*, by making them, in their slavery and humiliation, the true and adequate representatives of a debased, degraded, and undone people. My merits were, in having had an active though not always an ostentatious share, in every one act, without exception, of undisputed constitutional utility in my time, and in having supported, on all occasions, the authority, the efficiency, and the privileges of the Commons of Great Britain. I ended my services by a recorded and fully reasoned assertion on their own journals of their constitutional rights, and a vindication of their constitutional conduct. I labored in all things to merit

their inward approbation, and (along with the assistance of the largest, the greatest, and best of my endeavors) I received their free, unbiased, public, and solemn thanks.

Thus stands the account of the comparative merits of the crown grants which compose the Duke of Bedford's fortune as balanced against mine. In the name of common sense, why should the Duke of Bedford think that none but of the house of Russell are entitled to the favor of the Crown? Why should he imagine that no king of England has been capable of judging of merit but King Henry the Eighth? Indeed, he will pardon me; he is a little mistaken; all virtue did not end in the first Earl of Bedford. All discernment did not lose its vision when his creator closed his eyes. Let him remit his rigor on the disproportion between merit and reward in others, and they will make no inquiry into the origin of his fortune. They will regard with much more satisfaction, as he will contemplate with infinitely more advantage, whatever in his pedigree has been dulcified by an exposure to the influence of heaven in a long flow of generations, from the hard, acidulous, metallic tincture of the spring. It is little to be doubted that several of his forefathers in that long series have degenerated into honor and virtue. Let the Duke of Bedford (I am sure he will) reject with scorn and horror the counsels of the lecturers, those wicked panders to avarice and ambition, who would tempt him, in the troubles of his country, to seek another enormous fortune from the forfeitures of another nobility, and the plunder of another church. Let him (and I trust that yet he will) employ all the energy of his youth, and all the resources of his wealth, to crush rebellious principles which have no foundation in morals, and rebellious movements that have no provocation in tyranny.

Then will be forgot the rebellions which, by a doubtful priority in crime, his ancestor had provoked and extinguished. On such a conduct in the noble Duke, many of his countrymen might — and with some excuse might — give way to the enthusiasm of their gratitude, and, in the dashing style of some of the old declaimers, cry out that, if the Fates had found no other way in which they could give a Duke of Bedford and his opulence as props to a tottering world, then the butchery of the Duke of Buckingham might be tolerated; it might be regarded even with complacency, whilst in the heir of confiscation they saw



the sympathizing comforter of the martyrs who suffer under the cruel confiscation of this day; whilst they beheld with admiration his zealous protection of the virtuous and loyal nobility of France, and his manly support of his brethren, the yet standing nobility and gentry of his native land. Then his Grace's merit would be pure, and new, and sharp, as fresh from the mint of honor. As he pleased, he might reflect honor on his predecessors, or throw it forward on those who were to succeed him. He might be the propagator of the stock of honor, or the root of it, as he thought proper.

Had it pleased God to continue to me the hopes of succession, I should have been, according to my mediocrity, and the mediocrity of the age I live in, a sort of founder of a family; I should have left a son, who, in all the points in which personal merit can be viewed, in science, in erudition, in genius, in taste, in honor, in generosity, in humanity, in every liberal sentiment, and every liberal accomplishment, would not have shown himself inferior to the Duke of Bedford, or to any of those whom he traces in his line. His Grace very soon would have wanted all plausibility in his attack upon that provision which belonged more to mine than to me. HE would soon have supplied every deficiency, and symmetrized every disproportion. It would not have been for that successor to resort to any stagnant, wasting reservoir of merit in me, or in any ancestry. He had in himself a salient, living spring of generous and manly action. Every day he lived he would have repurchased the bounty of the Crown, and ten times more, if ten times more he had received. He was made a public creature, and had no enjoyment whatever but in the performance of some duty. At this exigent moment, the loss of a finished man is not easily supplied.

But a Disposer whose power we are little able to resist, and whose wisdom it behooves us not at all to dispute, has ordained it in another manner, and (whatever my querulous weakness might suggest) a far better. The storm has gone over me; and I lie like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honors, I am torn up by the roots, and lie prostrate on the earth. There, and prostrate there, I most unfeignedly recognize the divine justice, and in some degree submit to it. But whilst I humble myself before God, I do not know that it is forbidden to repel the

attacks of unjust and inconsiderate men. The patience of Job is proverbial. After some of the convulsive struggles of our irritable nature, he submitted himself, and repented in dust and ashes. But even so, I do not find him blamed for reprehending, and with a considerable degree of verbal asperity, those ill-natured neighbors of his, who visited his dunghill to read moral, political, and economical lectures on his misery. I am alone. I have none to meet my enemies in the gate. Indeed, my Lord, I greatly deceive myself if in this hard season I would give a peck of refuse wheat for all that is called fame and honor in the world. This is the appetite but of a few. It is a luxury, it is a privilege, it is an indulgence for those who are at their ease. But we are all of us made to shun disgrace, as we are made to shrink from pain and poverty and disease. It is an instinct; and under the direction of reason, instinct is always in the right. I live in an inverted order. They who ought to have succeeded me are gone before me. They who should have been to me as posterity are in the place of ancestors. I owe to the dearest relation (which ever must subsist in memory) that act of piety which he would have performed to me; I owe it to him to show that he was not descended, as the Duke of Bedford would have it, from an unworthy parent.

The Crown has considered me after long service; the Crown has paid the Duke of Bedford by advance. He has had a long credit for any service which he may perform hereafter. He is secure—and long may he be secure—in his advance, whether he performs any services or not. But let him take care how he endangers the safety of that constitution which secures his own utility or his own insignificance; or how he discourages those who take up even puny arms, to defend an order of things which, like the sun of heaven, shines alike on the useful and the worthless. His grants are ingrafted on the public law of Europe, covered with the awful hoar of innumerable ages. They are guarded by the sacred rules of prescription, found in that full treasury of jurisprudence from which the jejuneness and penury of our municipal law has, by degrees, been enriched and strengthened. This prescription I had my share (a very full share) in bringing to its perfection. The Duke of Bedford will stand as long as prescriptive law endures; as long as the great stable laws of property, common to us with all civilized nations, are kept in their integrity, and without the smallest inter-

mixture of laws, maxims, principles, or precedents of the Grand Revolution. They are secure against all changes but one. The whole revolutionary system — institutes, digest, code, novels, text, gloss, comment — are not only not the same, but they are the very reverse, and the reverse fundamentally, of all the laws on which civil life has hitherto been upheld in all the governments of the world. The learned professors of the Rights of Man regard prescription, not as a title to bar all claim set up against all possession — but they look on prescription as itself a bar against the possessor and proprietor. They hold an immemorial possession to be no more than a long-continued, and therefore an aggravated, injustice.

Such are *their* ideas; such *their* religion, and such *their* law. But as to *our* country and *our* race, as long as the well-compacted structure of our church and state, the sanctuary, the holy of holies of that ancient law, defended by reverence, defended by power, a fortress at once and a temple, shall stand inviolate on the brow of the British Sion, — as long as the British monarchy, not more limited than fenced by the orders of the state, shall, like the proud Keep of Windsor, rising in the majesty of proportion, and girt with the double belt of its kindred and coëval towers, — as long as this awful structure shall oversee and guard the subjected land, — so long the mounds and dikes of the low, fat Bedford level will have nothing to fear from all the pickaxes of all the levelers of France. As long as our sovereign lord the King, and his faithful subjects, the Lords and Commons of this realm, — the triple cord, which no man can break; the solemn, sworn, constitutional frank-pledge of this nation; the firm guarantees of each other's being and each other's rights; the joint and several securities, each in its place and order, for every kind and every quality of property and of dignity; — as long as these endure, so long the Duke of Bedford is safe, and we are all safe together — the high from the blights of envy and the spoliations of rapacity; the low from the iron hand of oppression and the insolent spurn of contempt. Amen! and so be it: and so it will be, —

*Dum domus Æneæ Capitoli immobile saxum  
Accolet, imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "While the race of Æneas shall dwell by the immovable rock of the Capitol, and Jupiter Capitolinus hold sway."



But if the rude inroad of Gallic tumult, with its sophistical Rights of Man to falsify the account, and its sword as a make-weight to throw into the scale, shall be introduced into our city by a misguided populace, set on by proud great men, themselves blinded and intoxicated by a frantic ambition, we shall all of us perish and be overwhelmed in a common ruin. If a great storm blow on our coast, it will cast the whales on the strand as well as the periwinkles. His Grace will not survive the poor grantee he despises, — no, not for a twelvemonth. If the great look for safety in the services they render to this Gallic cause, it is to be foolish, even above the weight of privilege allowed to wealth. If his Grace be one of these whom they endeavor to proselytize, he ought to be aware of the character of the sect whose doctrines he is invited to embrace. With them insurrection is the most sacred of revolutionary duties to the state. Ingratitude to benefactors is the first of revolutionary virtues. Ingratitude is indeed their four cardinal virtues compacted and amalgamated into one; and he will find it in everything that has happened since the commencement of the philosophic Revolution to this hour. If he pleads the merit of having performed the duty of insurrection against the order he lives in (God forbid he ever should), the merit of others will be to perform the duty of insurrection against him. If he pleads (again God forbid he should, and I do not suspect he will) his ingratitude to the Crown for its creation of his family, others will plead their right and duty to pay him in kind. They will laugh — indeed they will laugh — at his parchment and his wax. His deeds will be drawn out with the rest of the lumber of his evidence-room, and burnt to the tune of *ça ira* in the courts of Bedford (then Equality) House.

Am I to blame, if I attempt to pay his Grace's hostile reproaches to me with a friendly admonition to himself? Can I be blamed for pointing out to him in what manner he is likely to be affected, if the sect of the cannibal philosophers of France should proselytize any considerable part of this people, and, by their joint proselytizing arms, should conquer that government to which his Grace does not seem to me to give all the support his own security demands? Surely it is proper that he, and that others like him, should know the true genius of this sect: — what their opinions are, what they have done, and to whom;

and what (if a prognostic is to be formed from the dispositions and actions of men) it is certain they will do hereafter. He ought to know that they have sworn assistance — the only engagement they ever will keep — to all in this country who bear a resemblance to themselves, and who think, as such, that “the whole duty of man” consists in destruction. They are a misallied and disparaged branch of the house of Nimrod. They are the Duke of Bedford’s natural hunters; and he is their natural game. Because he is not very profoundly reflecting, he sleeps in profound security; they, on the contrary, are always vigilant, active, enterprising, and, though far removed from any knowledge which makes men estimable or useful, in all the instruments and resources of evil their leaders are not meanly instructed, or insufficiently furnished. In the French Revolution everything is new; and, from want of preparation to meet so unlooked-for an evil, everything is dangerous. Never before this time was a set of literary men converted into a gang of robbers and assassins. Never before did a den of bravoes and banditti assume the garb and tone of an academy of philosophers.

Let me tell his Grace that an union of such characters, monstrous as it seems, is not made for producing despicable enemies. But if they are formidable as foes, as friends they are dreadful indeed. The men of property in France, confiding in a force which seemed to be irresistible because it had never been tried, neglected to prepare for a conflict with their enemies at their own weapons. They were found in such a situation as the Mexicans were, when they were attacked by the dogs, the cavalry, the iron, and the gunpowder, of a handful of bearded men whom they did not know to exist in nature. This is a comparison that some, I think, have made; and it is just. In France they had their enemies within their houses. They were even in the bosoms of many of them. But they had not the sagacity to discern their savage character. They seemed tame, and even caressing. They had nothing but *douce humanité* in their mouth. They could not bear the punishment of the mildest laws on the greatest criminals. The slightest severity of justice made their flesh creep. The very idea that war existed in the world disturbed their repose. Military glory was no more, with them, than a splendid infamy. Hardly would they hear of self-defense,

which they reduced within such bounds as to leave it no defense at all. All this while they meditated the confiscations and massacres we have seen. Had any one told these unfortunate noblemen and gentlemen how, and by whom, the grand fabric of the French monarchy under which they flourished would be subverted, they would not have pitied him as a visionary, but would have turned from him as what they call a *mauvais plaisant*. Yet we have seen what has happened. The persons who have suffered from the cannibal philosophy of France are so like the Duke of Bedford, that nothing but his Grace's probably not speaking quite so good French could enable us to find out any difference. A great many of them had as pompous titles as he, and were of full as illustrious a race; some few of them had fortunes as ample; several of them, without meaning the least disparagement to the Duke of Bedford, were as wise, and as virtuous, and as valiant, and as well educated, and as complete in all the lineaments of men of honor, as he is; and to all this they had added the powerful out-guard of a military profession, which, in its nature, renders men somewhat more cautious than those who have nothing to attend to but the lazy enjoyment of undisturbed possessions. But security was their ruin. They are dashed to pieces in the storm, and our shores are covered with the wrecks. If they had been aware that such a thing might happen, such a thing never could have happened.

I assure his Grace that, if I state to him the designs of his enemies in a manner which may appear to him ludicrous and impossible, I tell him nothing that has not exactly happened, point by point, but twenty-four miles from our own shore. I assure him that the Frenchified faction, more encouraged than others are warned by what has happened in France, look at him and his landed possessions as an object at once of curiosity and rapacity. He is made for them in every part of their double character. As robbers, to them he is a noble booty; as speculatists, he is a glorious subject for their experimental philosophy. He affords matter for an extensive analysis in all the branches of their science, geometrical, physical, civil, and political. These philosophers are fanatics; independent of any interest, which if it operated alone would make them much more tractable, they are carried with such a headlong rage towards every desperate trial, that they would sacrifice the whole human race



to the slightest of their experiments. I am better able to enter into the character of this description of men than the noble Duke can be. I have lived long and variously in the world. Without any considerable pretensions to literature in myself, I have aspired to the love of letters. I have lived for a great many years in habitudes with those who professed them. I can form a tolerable estimate of what is likely to happen from a character chiefly dependent for fame and fortune on knowledge and talent, as well in its morbid and perverted state as in that which is sound and natural. Naturally men so formed and finished are the first gifts of Providence to the world. But when they have once thrown off the fear of God, which was in all ages too often the case, and the fear of man, which is now the case, and when in that state they come to understand one another, and to act in corps, a more dreadful calamity cannot arise out of hell to scourge mankind. Nothing can be conceived more hard than the heart of a thoroughbred metaphysician. It comes nearer to the cold malignity of a wicked spirit than to the frailty and passion of a man. It is like that of the principle of evil himself, — incorporeal, pure, unmixed, dephlegmated, defecated evil. It is no easy operation to eradicate humanity from the human breast. What Shakespeare calls "the compunctious visitings of nature" will sometimes knock at their hearts, and protest against their murderous speculations. But they have a means of compounding with their nature. Their humanity is not dissolved; they only give it a long prorogation. They are ready to declare that they do not think two thousand years too long a period for the good that they pursue. It is remarkable that they never see any way to their projected good but by the road of some evil. Their imagination is not fatigued with the contemplation of human suffering through the wild waste of centuries added to centuries of misery and desolation. Their humanity is at their horizon — and, like the horizon, it always flies before them. The geometricians and the chemists bring, the one from the dry bones of their diagrams, and the other from the soot of their furnaces, dispositions that make them worse than indifferent about those feelings and habitudes which are the supports of the moral world. Ambition is come upon them suddenly; they are intoxicated with it, and it has rendered them fearless of the danger which may from thence arise to

others or to themselves. These philosophers consider men, in their experiments, no more than they do mice in an air-pump or in a recipient of mephitic gas. Whatever his Grace may think of himself, they look upon him, and everything that belongs to him, with no more regard than they do upon the whiskers of that little long-tailed animal that has been long the game of the grave, demure, insidious, spring-nailed, velvet-pawed, green-eyed philosophers, whether going upon two legs or upon four.

His Grace's landed possessions are irresistibly inviting to an *agrarian* experiment. They are a downright insult upon the Rights of Man. They are more extensive than the territory of many of the Grecian republics, and they are without comparison more fertile than most of them. There are now republics in Italy, in Germany, and in Switzerland, which do not possess anything like so fair and ample a domain. There is scope for seven philosophers to proceed in their analytical experiments upon Harrington's seven different forms of republics, in the acres of this one Duke. Hitherto they have been wholly unproductive to speculation, — fitted for nothing but to fatten bullocks, and to produce grain for beer, still more to stupefy the dull English understanding. Abbé Sieyès has whole nests of pigeon-holes full of constitutions ready-made, ticketed, sorted, and numbered; suited to every season and every fancy: some with the top of the pattern at the bottom, and some with the bottom at the top; some plain, some flowered; some distinguished for their simplicity, others for their complexity; some of blood color, some of *boue de Paris*; some with directories, others without a direction; some with councils of elders, and councils of youngsters; some without any council at all. Some where the electors choose the representatives; others, where the representatives choose the electors. Some in long coats, and some in short coats; some with pantaloons; some without breeches. Some with five-shilling qualifications; some totally unqualified. So that no constitution-fancier may go unsuited from his shop, provided he loves a pattern of pillage, oppression, arbitrary imprisonment, confiscation, exile, revolutionary judgment, and legalized premeditated murder, in any shapes into which they can be put. What a pity it is that the progress of experimental philosophy should be checked by his Grace's

monopoly! Such are their sentiments, I assure him; such is their language, when they dare to speak; and such are their proceedings, when they have the means to act.

Their geographers and geometers have been some time out of practice. It is some time since they have divided their own country into squares. That figure has lost the charms of its novelty. They want new lands for new trials. It is not only the geometers of the Republic that find him a good subject; the chemists have bespoke him, after the geometers have done with him. As the first set have an eye on his Grace's lands, the chemists are not less taken with his buildings. They consider mortar as a very anti-revolutionary invention, in its present state, but, properly employed, an admirable material for overturning all establishments. They have found that the gunpowder of *ruins* is far the fittest for making other *ruins*, and so *ad infinitum*. They have calculated what quantity of matter convertible into nitre is to be found in Bedford House, in Woburn Abbey, and in what his Grace and his trustees have still suffered to stand of that foolish royalist, Inigo Jones, in Covent Garden. Churches, play-houses, coffee-houses, all alike are destined to be mingled, and equalized, and blended into one common rubbish; and, well sifted and lixiviated, to crystallize into true, democratic, explosive, insurrectionary nitre. Their academy *del Cimento*<sup>1</sup> (*per antiphrasin*), with Morveau and Hassenfratz at its head, have computed that the brave *sans-culottes* may make war on all the aristocracy of Europe for a twelve-month, out of the rubbish of the Duke of Bedford's buildings.

While the Morveaus and Priestleys are proceeding with these experiments upon the Duke of Bedford's houses, the Sieyès, and the rest of the analytical legislators and constitution-venders, are quite as busy in their trade of decomposing organization, in forming his Grace's vassals into primary assemblies, national guards, first, second, and third requisitioners, committees of research, conductors of the traveling guillotine, judges of revolutionary tribunals, legislative hangmen, supervisors of domiciliary visitation, exactors of forced loans, and assessors of the maximum.

<sup>1</sup> Experiment. In speaking of the term as standing for its opposite (*per antiphrasin*) Burke apparently alludes to its resemblance to *cement*.



The din of all this smithery may some time or other possibly wake this noble Duke, and push him to an endeavor to save some little matter from their experimental philosophy. If he pleads his grants from the Crown, he is ruined at the outset. If he pleads he has received them from the pillage of superstitious corporations, this indeed will stagger them a little, because they are enemies to all corporations, and to all religion. However, they will soon recover themselves, and will tell his Grace, or his learned counsel, that all such property belongs to the *nation*; and that it would be more wise for him, if he wishes to live the natural term of a *citizen* (that is, according to Condorcet's calculation, six months on an average), not to pass for an usurper upon the national property. This is what the *serjeants* at law of the Rights of Man will say to the puny *apprentices* of the common law of England.

Is the genius of philosophy not yet known? You may as well think the garden of the Tuileries was well protected with the cords of ribbon insultingly stretched by the National Assembly to keep the sovereign *canaille* from intruding on the retirement of the poor King of the French, as that such flimsy cobwebs will stand between the savages of the Revolution and their natural prey. Deep philosophers are no triflers; brave *sans-culottes* are no formalists. They will no more regard a Marquis of Tavistock than an Abbot of Tavistock; the Lord of Woburn will not be more respectable in their eyes than the Prior of Woburn; they will make no difference between the superior of a Covent Garden of nuns, and of a Covent Garden of another description. They will not care a rush whether his coat is long or short; whether the color be purple or blue-and-buff. They will not trouble *their* heads with what part of *his* head his hair is cut from; and they will look with equal respect on a tonsure and a crop. Their only question will be that of their Legendre, or some other of their legislative butchers, — how he cuts up? how he tallows in the caul, or on the kidneys?

Is it not a singular phenomenon that, whilst the *sans-culotte* carcass-butchers and the philosophers of the shambles are pricking their dotted lines upon his hide, and, like the print of the poor ox that we see in the shop-windows at Charing Cross, alive as he is, and thinking no harm in the world, he is divided into rumps, and sirloins, and briskets, and into all sorts of

pieces for roasting, boiling, and stewing, — that, all the while they are measuring *him*, his Grace is measuring *me*, — is invidiously comparing the bounty of the Crown with the deserts of the defender of his order, and in the same moment fawning on those who have the knife half out of the sheath? Poor innocent!

Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,  
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood. . . .

THOMAS PAINE  
THE RIGHTS OF MAN  
1791

[Paine was a citizen of the world rather than of any single nation; this work appeared while he was living, now in England, now in France, between the first and second periods of his American residence. The pamphlet is a reply to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution* (see the introductory note to the extracts from that work, page 576, above). It sold very rapidly, and circulated largely in America and in France as well as in England. A second part followed in 1792. The following extracts are from the first part.]

. . . MR. BURKE appears to have no idea of principles, when he is contemplating governments. "Ten years ago," says he, "I could have felicitated France on her having a government, without inquiring what the nature of that government was or how it was administered." Is this the language of a rational man? Is it the language of a heart feeling as it ought to feel for the rights and happiness of the human race? On this ground, Mr. Burke must compliment all the governments in the world, while the victims who suffer under them, whether sold into slavery or tortured out of existence, are wholly forgotten. It is power, and not principles, that Mr. Burke venerates; and under this abominable depravity, he is disqualified to judge between them. Thus much for his opinion as to the occasion of the French Revolution. I now proceed to other considerations.

I know a place in America called Point-no-Point, because, as you proceed along the shore, gay and flowery as Mr. Burke's language, it continually recedes, and presents itself at a distance before you; and when you have got as far as you can go, there is no point at all. Just thus it is with Mr. Burke's three hundred and sixty-six pages. It is therefore difficult to reply to him. But as the points that he wished to establish may be inferred from what he abuses, it is in his paradoxes that we must look for his arguments.

As to the tragic paintings by which Mr. Burke has outraged



his own imagination, and seeks to work upon that of his readers, they are very well calculated for theatrical representation, where facts are manufactured for the sake of show, and accommodated to produce, through the weakness of sympathy, a weeping effect. But Mr. Burke should recollect that he is writing history, and not plays; and that his readers will expect truth, and not the spouting rant of high-toned declamation.

When we see a man dramatically lamenting, in a publication intended to be believed, that "the age of chivalry is gone"; that "the glory of Europe is extinguished forever!"; that "the unbought grace of life [if any one knows what it is], the cheap defense of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise, is gone!"<sup>1</sup>; and all this because the Quixote age of chivalry nonsense is gone, what opinion can we form of his judgment, or what regard can we pay to his facts? In the rhapsody of his imagination, he has discovered a world of windmills, and his sorrows are that there are no Quixotes to attack them. But if the age of aristocracy, like that of chivalry, should fall, — and they had originally some connection, — Mr. Burke, the trumpeter of the order, may continue his parody to the end, and finish with exclaiming, "Othello's occupation's gone!"

Notwithstanding Mr. Burke's horrid paintings, when the French Revolution is compared with the revolutions of other countries, the astonishment will be that it is marked with so few sacrifices; but this astonishment will cease when we reflect that *principles*, and not *persons*, were the meditated objects of destruction. The mind of the nation was acted upon by a higher stimulus than what the consideration of persons could inspire, and sought a higher conquest than could be produced by the downfall of an enemy. Among the few who fell, there do not appear to be any that were intentionally singled out. They all of them had their fate in the circumstances of the moment, and were not pursued with that long, cold-blooded, unabated revenge which pursued the unfortunate Scotch in the affair of 1745.

Through the whole of Mr. Burke's book I do not observe that the Bastille is mentioned more than once, and that with a kind of implication as if he were sorry it was pulled down, and wished it were built up again. "We have rebuilt Newgate [says

<sup>1</sup> See page 588, above.

he] and tenanted the mansion; and we have prisons almost as strong as the Bastille for those who dare to libel the queens of France." As to what a madman, like the person called Lord George Gordon, might say, and to whom Newgate is rather a bedlam than a prison, it is unworthy a rational consideration. It was a madman that libeled — and that is sufficient apology, and it afforded an opportunity for confining him, which was the thing that was wished for. But certain it is that Mr. Burke, who does not call himself a madman, whatever other people may do, has libeled, in the most unprovoked manner, and in the grossest style of the most vulgar abuse, the whole representative authority of France; and yet Mr. Burke takes his seat in the British House of Commons! From his violence and his grief, his silence on some points and his excess on others, it is difficult not to believe that Mr. Burke is sorry, extremely sorry, that arbitrary power — the power of the Pope and the Bastille — are pulled down.

Not one glance of compassion, not one commiserating reflection, that I can find throughout his book, has he bestowed on those who lingered out the most wretched of lives, a life without hope in the most miserable of prisons. It is painful to behold a man employing his talents to corrupt himself. Nature has been kinder to Mr. Burke than he has to her. He is not affected by the reality of distress touching his heart, but by the showy resemblance of it striking his imagination. He pities the plumage, but forgets the dying bird. Accustomed to kiss the aristocratical hand that hath purloined him from himself, he degenerates into a composition of art, and the genuine soul of nature forsakes him. His hero or his heroine must be a tragedy victim, expiring in show, and not the real prisoner of misery, sliding into death in the silence of a dungeon. . . .

Before anything can be reasoned upon to a conclusion, certain facts, principles, or data, to reason from, must be established, admitted, or denied. Mr. Burke, with his usual outrage, abuses the Declaration of the Rights of Man, published by the National Assembly of France, as the basis on which the constitution of France is built. This he calls "paltry and blurred sheets of paper about the rights of man." Does Mr. Burke mean to deny that man has any rights? If he does, then he must mean that there are no such things as rights anywhere, and that

he has none himself; for who is there in the world but man? But if Mr. Burke means to admit that man has rights, the question then will be, What are those rights, and how came man by them originally?

The error of those who reason by precedents drawn from antiquity, respecting the rights of man, is that they do not go far enough into antiquity. They do not go the whole way. They stop in some of the intermediate stages of an hundred or a thousand years, and produce what was then done as a rule for the present day. This is no authority at all. If we travel still farther into antiquity, we shall find a direct contrary opinion and practice prevailing; and, if antiquity is to be authority, a thousand such authorities may be produced, successively contradicting each other. But if we proceed on, we shall at last come out right; we shall come to the time when man came from the hand of his Maker. What was he then? Man. Man was his high and only title, and a higher cannot be given him. But of titles I shall speak hereafter.

We are now got at the origin of man, and at the origin of his rights. As to the manner in which the world has been governed from that day to this, it is no farther any concern of ours than to make a proper use of the errors or the improvements which the history of it presents. Those who lived a hundred or a thousand years ago were then moderns, as we are now. They had *their* ancients, and those ancients had others, and we also shall be ancients in our turn. If the mere name of antiquity is to govern in the affairs of life, the people who are to live an hundred or a thousand years hence may as well take us for a precedent, as we make a precedent of those who lived an hundred or a thousand years ago. The fact is, that portions of antiquity, by proving everything, establish nothing. It is authority against authority all the way, till we come to the divine origin of the rights of man, at the creation. Here our inquiries find a resting-place, and our reason finds a home. If a dispute about the rights of man had arisen at the distance of an hundred years from the creation, it is to this source of authority they must have referred, and it is to the same source of authority that we must now refer.

Though I mean not to touch upon any sectarian principle of religion, yet it may be worth observing that the genealogy of



Christ is traced to Adam. Why, then, not trace the rights of man to the creation of man? I will answer the question. Because there have been upstart governments, thrusting themselves between, and presumptuously working to un-make man.

If any generation of men ever possessed the right of dictating the mode by which the world should be governed forever, it was the first generation that existed; and if that generation did not do it, no succeeding generation can show any authority for doing it, nor can set any up. The illuminating and divine principles of the equal rights of man (for it has its origin from the Maker of man) relates not only to the living individuals, but to generations of men succeeding each other. Every generation is equal in rights to the generations which preceded it, by the same rule that every individual is born equal in rights with his contemporary.

Every history of the creation, and every traditionary account, whether from the lettered or unlettered world, however they may vary in their opinion or belief of certain particulars, all agree in establishing one point, *the unity of man*; by which I mean that men are all of one degree, and consequently that all men are born equal, and with equal natural right, in the same manner as if posterity had been continued by creation instead of generation, the latter being only the mode by which the former is carried forward; and consequently, every child born into the world must be considered as deriving its existence from God. The world is as new to him as it was to the first man that existed, and his natural right in it is of the same kind.

The Mosaic account of the creation, whether taken as divine authority or merely historical, is full to this point, the unity or equality of man. The expression admits of no controversy. "And God said, let us make man in our image. In the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." The distinction of sexes is pointed out, but no other distinction is even implied. If this be not divine authority, it is at least historical authority, and shows that the equality of man, so far from being a modern doctrine, is the oldest upon record.

It is also to be observed that all the religions known in the world are founded, so far as they relate to man, on the unity of man, as being all of one degree. Whether in heaven or in hell,

or in whatever state man may be supposed to exist hereafter, the good and the bad are the only distinctions. Nay, even the laws of governments are obliged to slide into this principle, by making degrees to consist in crimes, and not in persons.

It is one of the greatest of all truths, and of the highest advantage to cultivate. By considering man in this light, and by instructing him to consider himself in this light, it places him in a close connection with all his duties, whether to his Creator, or to the creation of which he is a part; and it is only when he forgets his origin, or, to use a more fashionable phrase, his birth and family, that he becomes dissolute. It is not among the least of the evils of the present existing governments in all parts of Europe, that man, considered as man, is thrown back to a vast distance from his Maker, and the artificial chasm filled up with a succession of barriers, or sort of turnpike gates, through which he has to pass. I will quote Mr. Burke's catalogue of barriers that he has set up between man and his Maker. Putting himself in the character of a herald, he says: "We fear God — we look with awe to kings — with affection to parliaments — with duty to magistrates — with reverence to priests — and with respect to nobility." Mr. Burke has forgotten to put in "chivalry." He has also forgotten to put in Peter.

The duty of man is not a wilderness of turnpike gates, through which he is to pass by tickets from one to the other. It is plain and simple, and consists but of two points: his duty to God, which every man must feel, and with respect to his neighbor, to do as he would be done by. If those to whom power is delegated do well, they will be respected; if not, they will be despised. And with regard to those to whom no power is delegated, but who assume it, the rational world can know nothing of them. . . .

The rights of men in society are neither devisable or transferable, nor annihilable, but are descendable only; and it is not in the power of any generation to intercept finally, and cut off the descent. If the present generation, or any other, are disposed to be slaves, it does not lessen the right of the succeeding generation to be free; wrongs cannot have a legal descent. When Mr. Burke attempts to maintain that the "English na-

tion did, at the Revolution of 1688, most solemnly renounce and abdicate their rights for themselves, and for all their posterity forever," he speaks a language that merits not reply, and which can only excite contempt for his prostitute principles, or pity for his ignorance.

In whatever light hereditary succession, as growing out of the will and testament of some former generation, presents itself, it is an absurdity. A cannot make a will to take from B his property, and give it to C; yet this is the manner in which (what is called) hereditary succession by law operates. A certain former generation made a will to take away the rights of the commencing generation and all future ones, and convey those rights to a third person, who afterwards comes forward, and tells them, in Mr. Burke's language, that they have no rights, — that their rights are already bequeathed to him, and that he will govern in contempt of them. From such principles, and such ignorance, good Lord deliver the world!

But, after all, what is this metaphor called a crown, — or rather, what is monarchy? Is it a thing, or is it a name, or is it a fraud? Is it a "contrivance of human wisdom," or human craft, to obtain money from a nation under specious pretences? Is it a thing necessary to a nation? If it is, in what does that necessity consist? what service does it perform? what is its business? and what are its merits? Does the virtue consist in the metaphor, or in the man? Does the goldsmith that makes the crown, make the virtue also? Does it operate like Fortunatus's wishing-cap, or Harlequin's wooden sword? Doth it make a man a conjurer? In fine, what is it? It appears to be something going much out of fashion, falling into ridicule, and rejected in some countries both as unnecessary and expensive. In America it is considered as an absurdity, and in France it has so far declined that the goodness of the man, and the respect for his personal character, are the only things that preserve the appearance of its existence.

If government be what Mr. Burke describes it, "a contrivance of human wisdom," I might ask him if wisdom was at such a low ebb in England, that it was become necessary to import it from Holland and from Hanover? But I will do the country the justice to say that was not the case; and even if it was, it mistook the cargo. The wisdom of every country, when



properly exerted, is sufficient for all its purposes; and there could exist no more real occasion in England to have sent for a Dutch stadtholder, or a German elector, than there was in America to have done a similar thing. If a country does not understand its own affairs, how is a foreigner to understand them, who knows neither its laws, its manners, nor its language? If there existed a man so transcendently wise above all others, that his wisdom was necessary to instruct a nation, some reason might be offered for monarchy; but when we cast our eyes about a country, and observe how every part understands its own affairs; and when we look around the world, and see that, of all men in it, the race of kings are the most insignificant in capacity, our reason cannot fail to ask us — What are those men kept for?

If there is anything in monarchy which we people of America do not understand, I wish Mr. Burke would be so kind as to inform us. I see in America a government extending over a country ten times as large as England, and conducted with regularity for a fortieth part of the expense which government costs in England. If I ask a man in America if he wants a king, he retorts, and asks me if I take him for an idiot. How is it that this difference happens? Are we more or less wise than others? I see in America the generality of people living in a style of plenty unknown in monarchical countries; and I see that the principle of its government, which is that of the equal rights of man, is making a rapid progress in the world. . . .

JAMES BOSWELL  
THE JOURNAL OF A TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES  
WITH SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

1786

[The tour to the Hebrides took place in 1773, and Johnson published his account of it in 1775. Two years after his death, Boswell brought out this *Journal*, which was a kind of preliminary section of the *Life* that followed five years later. (The greater part of the earlier work was incorporated in the later.) On the inception of the biography, see Boswell's remarks on page 626, below. Two other preliminary sections, the Letter to Chesterfield and the Conversation with George III, were published in 1790. The success of the *Life* was immediate, and destined to be lasting beyond that of any other biography in the language. For the attitude toward it of Dr. Johnson's friends, see Miss Burney's Diary, page 523, above. The biography is not divided into chapters or sections; the passages reprinted below may be found in the edition of Dr. Birkbeck Hill, vol. I, pp. 227-259, 297-309, 337-343, 452-461, 476-482; vol. II, 37-46, 270-276, 290-294, 337-343; vol. III, 74-90; vol. IV, 40-42, 74-75, 359-371, 490-496.]

Saturday, 25th September.

. . . DR. JOHNSON went to bed soon. When one bowl of punch was finished, I rose, and was near the door, in my way upstairs to bed; but Corrichatachin said it was the first time Col had been in his house, and he should have his bowl; and would not I join in drinking it? The heartiness of my honest landlord, and the desire of doing social honor to our very obliging conductor, induced me to sit down again. Col's bowl was finished, and by that time we were well warmed. A third bowl was soon made, and that too was finished. We were cordial and merry to a high degree, but of what passed I have no recollection, with any accuracy. I remember calling Corrichatachin by the familiar appellation of Corri, which his friends do. A fourth bowl was made, by which time Col and young Mackinnon, Corrichatachin's son, slipped away to bed. I continued a little with Corri and Knockow, but at last I left them. It was near five in the morning when I got to bed.

Sunday, September 26.

I awaked at noon, with a severe headache. I was much vexed that I should have been guilty of such a riot, and afraid of a reproof from Dr. Johnson. I thought it very inconsistent with that conduct which I ought to maintain while the companion of the "Rambler." About one, he came into my room, and accosted me, "What, drunk yet?" His tone of voice was not that of severe upbraiding; so I was relieved a little. "Sir," said I, "they kept me up." He answered, "No, you kept them up, you drunken dog." This he said with good-humored English pleasantry. Soon afterwards, Corrichatachin, Col, and other friends assembled round my bed. Corri had a brandy bottle and glass with him, and insisted I should take a dram. "Ay," said Dr. Johnson, "fill him drunk again. Do it in the morning, that we may laugh at him all day. It is a poor thing for a fellow to get drunk at night, and skulk to bed, and let his friends have no sport." Finding him thus jocular, I became quite easy; and when I offered to get up, he very good-naturedly said, "You need be in no such hurry now." I took my host's advice, and drank some brandy, which I found an effectual cure for my headache. When I rose, I went into Dr. Johnson's room, and, taking up Mrs. Mackinnon's prayer-book, I opened it at the twentieth Sunday after Trinity, in the Epistle for which I read, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein there is excess." Some would have taken this as a divine interposition. . . .

Monday, October 11.

We had some days ago engaged the Campbelltown vessel to carry us to Mull, from the harbor where she lay. The morning was fine, and the wind fair and moderate; so we hoped at length to get away. Mrs. Macsweyn, who officiated as our landlady here, had never been on the mainland. On hearing this, Dr. Johnson said to me, before her, "That is rather being behind-hand with life. I would at least go and see Glenelg." BOSWELL: "You yourself, sir, have never seen anything but your native island." JOHNSON: "But, sir, by seeing London, I have seen as much of life as the world can show." BOSWELL: "You have not seen Pekin." JOHNSON: "What is Pekin? Ten thousand Londoners would *drive* all the people of Pekin; they would drive them like deer."



. . . The Sunday evening that we sat by ourselves at Aberdeen, I asked him several particulars of his life, from his early years, which he readily told me, and I wrote them down before him. This day I proceeded in my inquiries, also writing them in his presence. I have them on detached sheets. I shall collect authentic materials for *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*; and, if I survive him, I shall be one who will most faithfully do honor to his memory. I have now a vast treasure of his conversation, at different times, since the year 1762, when I first obtained his acquaintance; and by assiduous inquiry I can make up for not knowing him sooner.

. . . It may be objected by some persons, as it has been by one of my friends, that he who has the power of thus exhibiting an exact transcript of conversations is not a desirable member of society. I repeat the answer which I made to that friend: "Few, very few, need be afraid that their sayings will be recorded. Can it be imagined that I would take the trouble to gather what grows on every hedge, because I have collected such fruits as the *Nonpareil* and the *Bon Chrétien*?"

On the other hand, how useful is such a faculty, if well exercised! To it we owe all those interesting apothegms and memorabilia of the ancients, which Plutarch, Xenophon, and Valerius Maximus have transmitted to us. To it we owe all those instructive and entertaining collections which the French have made under the title of *Ana*, affixed to some celebrated name. To it we owe the *Table Talk* of Selden, the *Conversation* between Ben Jonson and Drummond of Hawthornden, Spence's *Anecdotes of Pope*, and other valuable remains in our own language. How delighted should we have been if thus introduced into the company of Shakespeare and Dryden, of whom we know scarcely anything but their admirable writings! What pleasure would it have given us to have known their petty habits, their characteristic manners, their modes of composition, and their genuine opinion of preceding writers and of their contemporaries! All these are now irrecoverably lost. Considering how many of the strongest and most brilliant effusions of exalted intellect must have perished, how much is it to be regretted that all men of distinguished wisdom and wit have not been attended by friends of taste enough to relish, and abilities enough to register, their conversation.

*Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona  
Multi, sed omnes illacrymabiles  
Urgentur, ignotique longa  
Nocte, carent quia vate sacro.*<sup>1</sup>

They whose inferior exertions are recorded, as serving to explain or illustrate the sayings of such men, may be proud of being thus associated, and of their names being transmitted to posterity, by being appended to an illustrious character.

Before I conclude, I think it proper to say that I have suppressed everything which I thought could really hurt any one now living. Vanity and self-conceit indeed may sometimes suffer. With respect to what is related, I considered it my duty to "extenuate nothing, nor set down aught in malice"; and with those lighter strokes of Dr. Johnson's satire, proceeding from a warmth and quickness of imagination, not from any malevolence of heart, and which on account of their excellence could not be omitted, I trust that they who are the subject of them have good sense and good temper enough not to be displeased.

I have only to add that I shall ever reflect with great pleasure on a tour which has been the means of preserving so much of the enlightened and instructive conversation of one whose virtues will, I hope, ever be an object of imitation, and whose powers of mind were so extraordinary that ages may revolve before such a man shall again appear.

## THE LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

1791

["IRENE" AND "THE RAMBLER"]

GARRICK being now vested with theatrical power by being manager of Drury Lane Theatre, he kindly and generously made use of it to bring out Johnson's tragedy, which had been long kept back for want of encouragement. But in this benevolent purpose he met with no small difficulty from the temper of Johnson, which could not brook that a drama which he had formed with much study, and had been obliged to keep more than the nine years of Horace, should be revised and altered at

<sup>1</sup> See note to page 464, above.

the pleasure of an actor. Yet Garrick knew well that without some alterations it would not be fit for the stage. A violent dispute having ensued between them, Garrick applied to the Reverend Dr. Taylor to interpose. Johnson was at first very obstinate. "Sir," said he, "the fellow wants me to make Mahomet run mad, that he may have an opportunity of tossing his hands and kicking his heels." He was, however, at last with difficulty prevailed on to comply with Garrick's wishes, so as to allow of some changes; but still there were not enough.

Dr. Adams was present the first night of the representation of *Irene*, and gave me the following account. "Before the curtain drew up, there were catcalls whistling, which alarmed Johnson's friends. The Prologue, which was written by himself in a manly strain, soothed the audience, and the play went off tolerably, till it came to the conclusion, when Mrs. Pritchard, the heroine of the piece, was to be strangled upon the stage, and was to speak two lines with the bow-string round her neck. The audience cried out 'Murder! Murder!' She several times attempted to speak, but in vain. At last she was obliged to go off the stage alive." This passage was afterwards struck out, and she was carried off to be put to death behind the scenes, as the play now has it. . . .

Notwithstanding all the support of such performers as Garrick, Barry, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Pritchard, and every advantage of dress and decoration, the tragedy of *Irene* did not please the public. Mr. Garrick's zeal carried it through for nine nights, so that the author had his three nights' profits; and from a receipt signed by him, now in the hands of Mr. James Dodsley, it appears that his friend Mr. Robert Dodsley gave him one hundred pounds for the copy, with his usual reservation of the right of one edition.

*Irene*, considered as a poem, is entitled to the praise of superior excellence. Analyzed into parts, it will furnish a rich store of noble sentiments, fine imagery, and beautiful language; but it is deficient in pathos, in that delicate power of touching the human feelings, which is the principal end of the drama. Indeed Garrick has complained to me that Johnson not only had not the faculty of producing the impressions of tragedy, but that he had not the sensibility to perceive them. His great friend Mr. Walmsley's prediction, that he would "turn out a



fine tragedy-writer," was therefore ill founded. Johnson was wise enough to be convinced that he had not the talents necessary to write successfully for the stage, and never made another attempt in that species of composition.

When asked how he felt upon the ill success of his tragedy, he replied, "Like the Monument"; meaning that he continued firm and unmoved as that column. And let it be remembered, as an admonition to the *genus irritabile* of dramatic writers, that this great man, instead of peevishly complaining of the bad taste of the town, submitted to its decision without a murmur. He had, indeed, upon all occasions, a great deference for the general opinion. "A man," said he, "who writes a book, thinks himself wiser or wittier than the rest of mankind; he supposes that he can instruct or amuse them, and the public to whom he appeals must, after all, be the judges of his pretensions." . . .

In 1750 he came forth in the character for which he was eminently qualified, a majestic teacher of moral and religious wisdom. The vehicle which he chose was that of a periodical paper, which he knew had been upon former occasions employed with great success. The *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian* were the last of the kind published in England, which had stood the test of a long trial; and such an interval had now elapsed since their publication as made him justly think that, to many of his readers, this form of instruction would in some degree have the advantage of novelty. A few days before the first of his Essays came out, there started another competitor for fame in the same form, under the title of *The Tatler Revived*, which I believe was "born but to die." Johnson was, I think, not very happy in the choice of his title, *The Rambler*, which certainly is not suited to a series of grave and moral discourses, which the Italians have literally, but ludicrously, translated by *Il Vagabondo*, and which had been lately assumed as the denomination of a vehicle of licentious tales, *The Rambler's Magazine*. He gave Sir Joshua Reynolds the following account of its getting this name. "What *must* be done, sir, *will* be done. When I was to begin publishing that paper, I was at a loss how to name it. I sat down at night upon my bedside, and resolved that I would not go to sleep till I had fixed its title. *The Rambler* seemed the best that occurred, and I took it."

With what devout and conscientious sentiments this paper was undertaken, is evidenced by the following prayer, which he composed and offered up on the occasion:—

“Almighty God, the giver of all good things, without whose help all labor is ineffectual, and without whose grace all wisdom is folly, grant, I beseech Thee, that in this undertaking thy Holy Spirit may not be withheld from me, but that I may promote thy glory, and the salvation of myself and others; grant this, O Lord, for the sake of thy Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.”

The first paper of the *Rambler* was published on Tuesday the 20th of March, 1749–50; and its author was enabled to continue it, without interruption, every Tuesday and Saturday, till Saturday, the 17th of March, 1752, on which day it closed. This is a strong confirmation of the truth of a remark of his, which I have had occasion to quote elsewhere, that “a man may write at any time, if he will set himself doggedly to it”; for, notwithstanding his constitutional indolence, his depression of spirits, and his labor in carrying on his Dictionary, he answered the stated calls of the press twice a week from the stores of his mind, during all that time; having received no assistance, except four billets in No. 10, by Miss Mulso, now Mrs. Chapone; No. 30, by Mrs. Catherine Talbot; No. 97, by Mr. Samuel Richardson, whom he describes in an introductory note as “an author who has enlarged the knowledge of human nature, and taught the passions to move at the command of virtue”; and Numbers 44 and 100, by Mrs. Elizabeth Carter.

Posterity will be astonished when they are told, upon the authority of Johnson himself, that many of these discourses, which we should suppose had been labored with all the slow attention of literary leisure, were written in haste as the moment pressed, without even being read over by him before they were printed. It can be accounted for only in this way: that by reading and meditation, and a very close inspection of life, he had accumulated a great fund of miscellaneous knowledge, which, by a peculiar promptitude of mind, was ever ready at his call, and which he had constantly accustomed himself to clothe in the most apt and energetic expression. Sir Joshua Reynolds once asked him by what means he had attained his extraordinary accuracy and flow of language. He told him that

he had early laid it down as a fixed rule to do his best on every occasion, and in every company, to impart whatever he knew in the most forcible language he could put it in; and that by constant practice, and never suffering any careless expressions to escape him, or attempting to deliver his thoughts without arranging them in the clearest manner, it became habitual to him. . . .

As the *Rambler* was entirely the work of one man, there was, of course, such a uniformity in its texture as very much to exclude the charm of variety; and the grave and often solemn cast of thinking, which distinguished it from other periodical papers, made it for some time not generally liked. So slowly did this excellent work, of which twelve editions have now issued from the press, gain upon the world at large, that even in the closing number the author says, "I have never been much a favorite of the public."

Yet, very soon after its commencement, there were who felt and acknowledged its uncommon excellence. Verses in its praise appeared in the newspapers; and the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* mentions, in October, his having received several letters to the same purpose from the learned. *The Student, or Oxford and Cambridge Miscellany*, in which Mr. Bonnell Thornton and Mr. Colman were the principal writers, describes it as "a work that exceeds anything of the kind ever published in this kingdom, some of the 'Spectators' excepted—if, indeed they may be excepted." And afterwards, "May the public favors crown his merits, and may not the English, under the auspicious reign of George the Second, neglect a man who, had he lived in the first century, would have been one of the greatest favorites of Augustus." This flattery of the monarch had no effect. It is too well known that the second George never was an Augustus to learning or genius.

Johnson told me, with an amiable fondness, a little pleasing circumstance relative to this work. Mrs. Johnson, in whose judgment and taste he had great confidence, said to him, after a few numbers of the *Rambler* had come out, "I thought very well of you before; but I did not imagine you could have written anything equal to this." Distant praise, from whatever quarter, is not so delightful as that of a wife whom a man loves and esteems. Her approbation may be said to "come home to



his bosom," and being so near, its effect is most sensible and permanent. . . .

To point out the numerous subjects which the *Rambler* treats, with a dignity and perspicuity which are there united in a manner which we shall in vain look for anywhere else, would take up too large a portion of my book, and would, I trust, be superfluous, considering how universally those volumes are now disseminated. Even the most condensed and brilliant sentences which they contain, and which have very properly been selected under the name of *Beauties*, are of considerable bulk. But I may shortly observe that the *Rambler* furnishes such an assemblage of discourses on practical religion and moral duty, of critical investigations, and allegorical and Oriental tales, that no mind can be thought very deficient that has, by constant study and meditation, assimilated to itself all that may be found there. . . . Though instruction be the predominant purpose of the *Rambler*, yet it is enlivened with a considerable portion of amusement. Nothing can be more erroneous than the notion which some persons have entertained, that Johnson was then a retired author, ignorant of the world, and, of consequence, that he wrote only from his imagination, when he described characters and manners. He said to me that before he wrote that work he had been "running about the world," as he expressed it, more than almost anybody; and I have heard him relate with much satisfaction that several of the characters in the *Rambler* were drawn so naturally that, when it first circulated in numbers, a club in one of the towns of Essex imagined themselves to be severely exhibited in it, and were much incensed against a person who, they suspected, had thus made them objects of public notice; nor were they quieted till authentic assurance was given them that the *Rambler* was written by a person who had never heard of any one of them. Some of the characters are believed to have been actually drawn from the life, particularly that of Prospero from Garrick, who never entirely forgave its pointed satire. . . .

The style of this work has been censured by some shallow critics as involved and turgid, and abounding with antiquated and hard words. So ill-founded is the first part of this objection, that I will challenge all who may honor this book with a perusal, to point out any English writer whose language con-

veys his meaning with equal force and perspicuity. It must, indeed, be allowed that the structure of his sentences is expanded, and often has somewhat the inversion of the Latin, and that he delighted to express familiar thoughts in philosophical language, being in this the reverse of Socrates, who, it was said, reduced philosophy to the simplicity of common life. But let us attend to what he himself says in his concluding paper: "When common words were less pleasing to the ear, or less distinct in their signification, I have familiarized the terms of philosophy by applying them to popular ideas." And as to the second part of this objection, upon a late careful revision of the work I can with confidence say that it is amazing how few of those words, for which it has been unjustly characterized, are actually to be found in it; I am sure, not the proportion of one to each paper. This idle charge has been echoed from one babbler to another, who have confounded Johnson's *Essays* with Johnson's *Dictionary*, and, because he thought it right in a lexicon of our language to collect many words which had fallen into disuse, but were supported by great authorities, it has been imagined that all of these have been interwoven into his own compositions. That some of them have been adopted by him unnecessarily, may perhaps be allowed; but in general they are evidently an advantage, for without them his stately ideas would be confined and cramped. "He that thinks with more extent than another, will want words of larger meaning." He once told me that he had formed his style upon that of Sir William Temple and upon Chambers's *Proposal* for his *Dictionary*. He certainly was mistaken; or if he imagined at first that he was imitating Temple, he was very unsuccessful, for nothing can be more unlike than the simplicity of Temple and the richness of Johnson. Their styles differ as plain cloth and brocade. . . .

Johnson's language, however, must be allowed to be too masculine for the delicate gentleness of female writing. His ladies, therefore, seem strangely formal, even to ridicule, and are well denominated by the names which he has given them, — as *Misella*, *Zozima*, *Properantia*, *Rhodoclia*.

[DR. JOHNSON AND LORD CHESTERFIELD]

Lord Chesterfield, to whom Johnson had paid the high compliment of addressing to his Lordship the *Plan* of his *Diction-*

ary, had behaved to him in such a manner as to excite his contempt and indignation. The world has for many years been amused with a story, confidently told and as confidently repeated with additional circumstances, that a sudden disgust was taken by Johnson upon occasion of his having been one day kept long in waiting in his lordship's antechamber, for which the reason assigned was that he had company with him; and that at last, when the door opened, out walked Colley Cibber; and that Johnson was so violently provoked when he found for whom he had been so long excluded that he went away in a passion, and never would return. I remember having mentioned this story to George Lord Lyttelton, who told me he was very intimate with Lord Chesterfield, and, holding it as a well-known truth, defended Lord Chesterfield by saying that Cibber, who had been introduced familiarly by the back stairs, had probably not been there above ten minutes. It may seem strange even to entertain a doubt concerning a story so long and so widely current, and thus implicitly adopted, if not sanctioned, by the authority which I have mentioned; but Johnson himself assured me that there was not the least foundation for it. He told me that there never was any particular incident which produced a quarrel between Lord Chesterfield and him, but that his lordship's continued neglect was the reason why he resolved to have no connection with him.

When the Dictionary was upon the eve of publication, Lord Chesterfield, who, it is said, had flattered himself with expectations that Johnson would dedicate the work to him, attempted, in a courtly manner, to soothe and insinuate himself with the sage, — conscious, as it should seem, of the cold indifference with which he had treated its learned author; and further attempted to conciliate him by writing two papers in *The World* in recommendation of the work; and it must be confessed that they contain some studied compliments, so finely turned that, if there had been no previous offense, it is probable that Johnson would have been highly delighted. Praise, in general, was pleasing to him; but by praise from a man of rank and elegant accomplishments he was peculiarly gratified. . . .

This courtly device failed of its effect. Johnson, who thought that "all was false and hollow," despised the honeyed words, and was even indignant that Lord Chesterfield should for a



moment imagine that he could be the dupe of such an artifice. His expression to me concerning Lord Chesterfield, upon this occasion, was, "Sir, after making great professions, he had for many years taken no notice of me; but when my Dictionary was coming out, he fell a-scribbling in *The World* about it. Upon which I wrote him a letter expressed in civil terms, but such as might show him that I did not mind what he said or wrote, and that I had done with him."

This is that celebrated letter of which so much has been said, and about which curiosity has been so long excited without being gratified. I for many years solicited Johnson to favor me with a copy of it, that so excellent a composition might not be lost to posterity. He delayed from time to time to give it to me; till at last, in 1781, when we were on a visit at Mr. Dilly's, at Southill in Bedfordshire, he was pleased to dictate it to me from memory. He afterwards found among his papers a copy of it, which he had dictated to Mr. Baretti, with its title and corrections in his own handwriting. This he gave to Mr. Langton, adding that if it were to come into print, he wished it to be from that copy. By Mr. Langton's kindness I am enabled to enrich my work with a perfect transcript of what the world has so eagerly desired to see.

February 7, 1775.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

MY LORD,

I have been lately informed by the proprietor of *The World* that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished is an honor which, being very little accustomed to favors from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*; — that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending. But I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my lord, have now passed since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain,

and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favor. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favorer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I shall conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have long wakened from that dream of hope in which I once boasted myself, with so much exultation.

My Lord, your lordship's most humble,

Most obedient servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

. . . There is a curious minute circumstance which struck me, in comparing the various editions of Johnson's *Imitations of Juvenal*. In the tenth Satire, one of the couplets upon the vanity of wishes even for literary distinction stood thus:—

Yet think what ills the scholar's life assail,  
Pride,<sup>1</sup> envy, want, the *garret*, and the jail.

But after experiencing the uneasiness which Lord Chesterfield's fallacious patronage made him feel, he dismissed the word *garret* from the sad group, and in all subsequent editions the line stands:—

Pride, envy, want, the *patron*, and the jail.

That Lord Chesterfield must have been mortified by the lofty contempt, and polite yet keen satire, with which Johnson exhibited him to himself in this letter, it is impossible to doubt. He, however, with that glossy duplicity which was his constant study, affected to be quite unconcerned. Dr. Adams mentioned to Mr. Robert Dodsley that he was sorry Johnson had written his letter to Lord Chesterfield. Dodsley, with the true feelings of trade, said "he was very sorry too; for that he had a property in the Dictionary, to which his lordship's patronage might have

<sup>1</sup> "Pride" is misquoted for *toil*.

been of consequence." He then told Dr. Adams that Lord Chesterfield had shown him the letter. "I should have imagined," replied Dr. Adams, "that Lord Chesterfield would have concealed it." "Poh!" said Dodsley, "do you think a letter from Johnson could hurt Lord Chesterfield? Not at all, sir. It lay upon his table, where anybody might see it. He read it to me; said, 'This man has great powers,' pointed out the severest passages, and observed how well they were expressed." This air of indifference, which imposed upon the worthy Dodsley, was certainly nothing but a specimen of that dissimulation which Lord Chesterfield inculcated as one of the most essential lessons for the conduct of life. His lordship endeavored to justify himself to Dodsley from the charges brought against him by Johnson; but we may judge of the flimsiness of his defense, from his having excused his neglect of Johnson by saying that "he had heard he had changed his lodgings, and did not know where he lived"; as if there could have been the smallest difficulty to inform himself of that circumstance, by inquiring in the literary circle with which his lordship was well acquainted, and was indeed himself one of its ornaments.

Dr. Adams expostulated with Johnson, and suggested that his not being admitted when he called on him was probably not to be imputed to Lord Chesterfield; for his lordship had declared to Dodsley that "he would have turned off the best servant he ever had, if he had known that he denied him to a man who would have been always more than welcome"; and in confirmation of this he insisted on Lord Chesterfield's general affability and easiness of access, especially to literary men. "Sir," said Johnson, "that is not Lord Chesterfield; he is the proudest man this day existing." "No," said Dr. Adams, "there is one person, at least, as proud; I think, by your own account, you are the prouder man of the two." "But mine," replied Johnson instantly, "was *defensive* pride." This, as Dr. Adams well observed, was one of those happy turns for which he was so remarkably ready.

Johnson, having now explicitly avowed his opinion of Lord Chesterfield, did not refrain from expressing himself concerning that nobleman with a pointed freedom. "This man," said he, "I thought had been a lord among wits, but I find he is only



a wit among lords!" And when his Letters to his natural son were published, he observed that "they teach the morals of a whore, and the manners of a dancing-master."

[THE DICTIONARY]

The *Dictionary, with a Grammar and History of the English Language*, being now at length published, in two volumes folio, the world contemplated with wonder so stupendous a work achieved by one man, while other countries had thought such undertakings fit only for whole academies. Vast as his powers were, I cannot but think that his imagination deceived him, when he supposed that by constant application he might have performed the task in three years. Let the Preface be attentively perused, in which is given, in a clear, strong, glowing style, a comprehensive yet particular view of what he had done, and it will be evident that the time he employed upon it was comparatively short. I am unwilling to swell my book with long quotations from what is in everybody's hands, and I believe there are few prose compositions in the English language that are read with more delight, or are more impressed upon the memory, than that preliminary discourse. . . . The extensive reading which was absolutely necessary for the accumulation of authorities, and which alone may account for Johnson's retentive mind being enriched with a very large and various store of knowledge and imagery, must have occupied several years. The Preface furnishes an eminent instance of a double talent, of which Johnson was dully conscious. Sir Joshua Reynolds heard him say, "There are two things which I am confident I can do very well: one is an introduction to any literary work, stating what it is to contain, and how it should be executed in the most perfect manner; the other is a conclusion, showing from various causes why the execution has not been equal to what the author promised to himself and to the public."

How should puny scribblers be abashed and disappointed, when they find him displaying a perfect theory of lexicographical excellence, yet at the same time candidly and modestly allowing that he "had not satisfied his own expectations." Here was a fair occasion for the exercise of Johnson's modesty, when he was called upon to compare his own arduous performance, not with those of other individuals (in which case his

inflexible regard to truth would have been violated had he affected diffidence), but with speculative perfection; as he who can outstrip all his competitors in the race may yet be sensible of his deficiency when he runs against time. Well might he say that "the English Dictionary was written with little assistance of the learned"; for he told me that the only aid which he received was a paper containing twenty etymologies, sent to him by a person then unknown, who he was afterwards informed was Dr. Pearce, Bishop of Rochester. The etymologies, though they exhibit learning and judgment, are not, I think, entitled to the first praise among the various parts of this immense work. The definitions have always appeared to me such astonishing proofs of acuteness of intellect and precision of language, as indicate a genius of the highest rank. This it is which marks the superior excellence of Johnson's Dictionary over others equally or even more voluminous, and must have made it a work of much greater mental labor than mere Lexicons, or *Word-Books*, as the Dutch call them. They who will make the experiment of trying how they can define a few words of whatever nature, will soon be satisfied of the unquestionable justice of this observation, which I can assure my readers is founded upon much study, and upon communication with more minds than my own.

A few of his definitions must be admitted to be erroneous. Thus *Windward* and *Leeward*, though directly of opposite meaning, are defined identically the same way; as to which inconsiderable specks it is enough to observe that his Preface announced that he was aware there might be many such in so immense a work; nor was he at all disconcerted when an instance was pointed out to him. A lady once asked him how he came to define *Pastern* the *knee* of a horse; instead of making an elaborate defense, as she expected, he at once answered, "Ignorance, Madam, — pure ignorance." His definition of *Network*<sup>1</sup> has been often quoted with sportive malignity, as obscuring a thing in itself very plain. But to these frivolous censures no other answer is necessary than that which we are furnished by his own Preface: "To explain, requires the use of terms less abstruse than that which is to be explained, and such terms cannot always be found; for as nothing can be proved but by

<sup>1</sup> "Anything reticulated or decussated, at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections."

supposing something intuitively known, and evident without proof, so nothing can be defined but by the use of words too plain to admit of definition. Sometimes easier words are changed into harder; as, *burial* into *sepulture* or *interment*; *dry* into *dessicative*; *dryness* into *siccidity* or *aridity*; *fit* into *paroxysm*; for the easiest word, whatever it is, can never be translated into one more easy."

His introducing his own opinions, and even prejudices, under general definitions of words, while at the same time the original meaning of the words is not explained, as his *Tory*, *Whig*, *Pension*, *Oats*, *Excise*,<sup>1</sup> and a few more, cannot be fully defended, and must be placed to the account of capricious and humorous indulgence. Talking to me upon this subject when we were at Ashbourne in 1777, he mentioned a still stronger instance of the predominance of his private feelings in the composition of this work than any now to be found in it. "You know, sir, Lord Gower forsook the old Jacobite interest. When I came to the word *renegado*, after telling that it meant 'one who deserts to the enemy, a revolter,' I added, 'Sometimes we say a *Gower*.' Thus it went to the press; but the printer had more wit than I, and struck it out."

Let it, however, be remembered that this indulgence does not display itself only in sarcasm against others, but sometimes in playful allusion to the notions commonly entertained of his own laborious task. Thus: "*Grub-street*, the name of a street in London, much inhabited by writers of small histories, *dictionaries*, and temporary poems; whence any mean production is called *Grub-street*." — "*Lexicographer*, a writer of dictionaries, a *harmless drudge*."

[BOSWELL'S FIRST MEETING WITH DR. JOHNSON]

Mr. Thomas Davies, the actor, who then kept a bookseller's shop in Russell Street, Covent Garden, told me that Johnson

<sup>1</sup> These definitions were: —

"*Tory*. One who adheres to the ancient constitution of the state, and the apostolical hierarchy of the Church of England."

"*Whig*. The name of a faction."

"*Pension*. An allowance made to any one without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country."

"*Oats*. A grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people."

"*Excise*. A hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid."



was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him; but by some unlucky accident or other he was prevented from coming to us. . . .

At last, on Monday, the 16th of May,<sup>1</sup> when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back parlor, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr. Davies having perceived him, through the glass door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing toward us, he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost: "Look, my lord, it comes!" I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his Dictionary, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation; which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated, and, recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from." "From Scotland," cried Davies, roguishly. "Mr. Johnson," said I, "I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as an humiliating abasement at the expense of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for, with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression, "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country, and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, sir, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal, and when we had sat down I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: "What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full and that an order would be worth three shillings." Eager to take any opening to get

<sup>1</sup> 1763.

into conversation with him, I ventured to say, "O, sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir," said he, with a stern look, "I have known David Garrick longer than you have done, and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil. I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And in truth, had not my ardor been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me from ever making any further attempts. Fortunately, however, I remained upon the field not wholly discomfited, and was soon rewarded by hearing some of his conversation, of which I preserved the following short minute, without marking the questions and observations by which it was produced.

"People," he remarked, "may be taken in once, who imagine that an author is greater in private life than other men. Uncommon parts require uncommon opportunities for their exertion.

"In barbarous society, superiority of parts is of real consequence. Great strength or great wisdom is of much value to an individual. But in more polished times there are people to do everything for money, and then there are a number of other superiorities, such as those of birth, and fortune, and rank, that dissipate men's attention, and leave no extraordinary share of respect for personal and intellectual superiority. This is wisely ordered by Providence, to preserve some equality among mankind." . . .

I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigor of his conversation, and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had, for a part of the evening, been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly; so that I was satisfied that, though there was a roughness in his manner, there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door, and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, "Don't be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well."

A few days afterwards I called on Davies, and asked him if he thought I might take the liberty of waiting on Mr. Johnson at his chambers in the Temple. He said I certainly might, and that Mr. Johnson would take it as a compliment. So upon Tuesday, the 24th of May, after having been enlivened by the witty sallies of Messieurs Thornton, Wilkes, Churchill, and Lloyd, with whom I had passed the morning, I boldly repaired to Johnson. His chambers were on the first floor of No. 1, Inner Temple Lane, and I entered them with an impression given me by the Reverend Dr. Blair, of Edinburgh, who had been introduced to him not long before, and described his having "found the Giant in his den"; an expression which, when I came to be pretty well acquainted with Johnson, I repeated to him, and he was diverted at this picturesque account of himself. Dr. Blair had been presented to him by Dr. James Fordyce. At this time the controversy concerning the pieces published by Mr. James Macpherson, as translations of Ossian, was at its height. Johnson had all along denied their authenticity; and, what was still more provoking to their admirers, maintained that they had no merit. The subject having been introduced by Dr. Fordyce, Dr. Blair, relying on the internal evidence of their antiquity, asked Dr. Johnson whether he thought any man of a modern age could have written such poems. Johnson replied, "Yes, sir, many men, many women, and many children." Johnson, at this time, did not know that Dr. Blair had just published a Dissertation, not only defending their authenticity, but seriously ranking them with the poems of Homer and Virgil; and when he was afterwards informed of this circumstance, he expressed some displeasure at Dr. Fordyce's having suggested the topic, and said, "I am not sorry that they got thus much for their pains. Sir, it was like leading one to talk of a book when the author is concealed behind the door."

He received me very courteously; but it must be confessed that his apartment, and furniture, and morning dress, were sufficiently uncouth. His brown suit of clothes looked very rusty; he had on a little old, shriveled, unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt-neck and knees of his breeches were loose; his black worsted stockings ill drawn up; and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But



all these slovenly particulars were forgotten the moment that he began to talk. Some gentlemen, whom I do not recollect, were sitting with him, and when they went away, I also rose; but he said to me, "Nay, don't go." "Sir," said I, "I am afraid that I intrude upon you. It is benevolent to allow me to sit and hear you." He seemed pleased with this compliment, which I sincerely paid him, and answered, "Sir, I am obliged to any man who visits me." I have preserved the following short minute of what passed this day.

"Madness frequently discovers itself merely by unnecessary deviation from the usual modes of the world. My poor friend Smart showed the disturbance of his mind by falling upon his knees and saying his prayers in the street, or in any other unusual place. Now although, rationally speaking, it is greater madness not to pray at all, than to pray as Smart did, I am afraid there are so many who do not pray, that their understanding is not called in question."

Concerning this unfortunate poet, Christopher Smart, who was confined in a madhouse, he had, at another time, the following conversation with Dr. Burney. BURNAY: "How does poor Smart do, sir? Is he likely to recover?" JOHNSON: "It seems as if his mind had ceased to struggle with the disease, for he grows fat upon it." BURNAY: "Perhaps, sir, that may be from want of exercise." JOHNSON: "No, sir; he has partly as much exercise as he used to have, for he digs in the garden. Indeed, before his confinement, he used for exercise to walk to the ale-house; but he was *carried* back again. I did not think he ought to be shut up. His infirmities were not noxious to society. He insisted on people praying with him, and I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as any one else. Another charge was that he did not love clean linen, and I have no passion for it."

Johnson continued: "Mankind have a great aversion to intellectual labor; but even supposing knowledge to be easily attainable, more people would be content to be ignorant than would take even a little trouble to acquire it."

"The morality of an action depends on the motive from which we act. If I fling half a crown to a beggar with intention to break his head, and he picks it up and buys victuals with it, the physical effect is good; but, with respect to me, the action is very wrong. So religious exercises, if not performed with an

intention to please God, avail us nothing. As our Saviour says of those who perform them from other motives, 'Verily they have their reward.'" . . .

Talking of Garrick, he said, "He is the first man in the world for sprightly conversation."

When I rose a second time, he again pressed me to stay, which I did.

He told me that he generally went abroad at four in the afternoon, and seldom came home till two in the morning. I took the liberty to ask if he did not think it wrong to live thus, and not make more use of his great talents. He owned it was a bad habit. On reviewing, at the distance of many years, my journal of this period, I wonder how, at my first visit, I ventured to talk to him so freely, and that he bore it with so much indulgence.

Before we parted, he was so good as to promise to favor me with his company one evening at my lodgings, and, as I took my leave, shook me cordially by the hand. It is almost needless to add that I felt no little elation at having now so happily established an acquaintance of which I had been so long ambitious.

My readers will, I trust, excuse me for being thus minutely circumstantial, when it is considered that the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson was to me a most valuable acquisition, and laid the foundation of whatever instruction and entertainment they may receive from my collections concerning the great subject of the work which they are now perusing.

[GOLDSMITH]

As Dr. Oliver Goldsmith will frequently appear in this narrative, I shall endeavor to make my readers in some degree acquainted with his singular character. He was a native of Ireland, and a contemporary with Mr. Burke at Trinity College, Dublin, but did not then give much promise of future celebrity. He, however, observed to Mr. Malone, that "though he made no great figure in mathematics, which was a study in much repute there, he could turn an Ode of Horace into English better than any of them. He afterwards studied physic in Edinburgh, and upon the Continent; and, I have been informed, was enabled to pursue his travels on foot, partly by demanding,

at Universities, to enter the lists as a disputant, by which, according to the custom of many of them, he was entitled to the premium of a crown, when, luckily for him, his challenge was not accepted; so that, as I once observed to Johnson, he *disputed* his passage through Europe. He then came to England, and was employed successively in the capacities of usher to an academy, a corrector of the press, a reviewer, and a writer for a newspaper. He had sagacity enough to cultivate assiduously the acquaintance of Johnson, and his faculties were gradually enlarged by the contemplation of such a model. To me and many others it appeared that he studiously copied the manner of Johnson, though indeed upon a smaller scale.

At this time I think he had published nothing with his name, though it was pretty generally known that "one Dr. Goldsmith" was the author of *An Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, and of *The Citizen of the World*, a series of letters supposed to be written from London by a Chinese. No man had the art of displaying with more advantage, as a writer, whatever literary acquisitions he made. *Nihil quod tetigit non ornavit*.<sup>1</sup>

His mind resembled a fertile but thin soil. There was a quick, but not a strong, vegetation of whatever chanced to be thrown upon it. No deep root could be struck. The oak of the forest did not grow there; but the elegant shrubbery and the fragrant parterre appeared in gay succession. It has been generally circulated and believed that he was a mere fool in conversation, but in truth this has been greatly exaggerated. He had, no doubt, a more than common share of that hurry of ideas which we often find in his countrymen, and which sometimes produces a laughable confusion in expressing them. He was very much what the French call *un étourdi*, and from vanity, and an eager desire of being conspicuous wherever he was, he frequently talked carelessly, without knowledge of the subject or even without thought. His person was short, his countenance coarse and vulgar, his deportment that of a scholar awkwardly affecting the easy gentleman. Those who were in any way distinguished excited envy in him to so ridiculous an excess, that the instances of it are hardly credible. When accompanying two beautiful young ladies, with their mother, on a tour in France,

<sup>1</sup> "Whatever he touched he adorned." From Johnson's epitaph on Goldsmith.



he was seriously angry that more attention was paid to them than to him; and once, at the exhibition of the Fantoccini<sup>1</sup> in London, when those who sat next him observed with what dexterity a puppet was made to toss a pike, he could not bear that it should have such praise, and exclaimed with some warmth, "Pshaw! I can do it better myself."

He, I am afraid, had no settled system of any sort, so that his conduct must not be strictly scrutinized; but his affections were social and generous, and when he had money he gave it away very liberally. His desire of imaginary consequence predominated over his attention to truth. When he began to rise into notice, he said he had a brother who was Dean of Durham, a fiction so easily detected that it is wonderful how he should have been so inconsiderate as to hazard it. He boasted to me at this time of the power of his pen in commanding money, which I believe was true in a certain degree, though in the instance he gave he was by no means correct. He told me that he had sold a novel for four hundred pounds. This was his *Vicar of Wakefield*. But Johnson informed me that he had made the bargain for Goldsmith, and the price was sixty pounds. "And, sir," said he, "a sufficient price, too, when it was sold; for then the fame of Goldsmith had not been elevated, as it afterwards was, by his *Traveler*; and the bookseller had such faint hopes of profit by his bargain that he kept the manuscript by him a long time, and did not publish it till after the *Traveler* had appeared. Then, to be sure, it was accidentally worth more money."

Mrs. Piozzi and Sir John Hawkins have strangely misstated the history of Goldsmith's situation and Johnson's friendly interference, when this novel was sold. I shall give it authentically from Johnson's own exact narration: "I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and, as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to

<sup>1</sup> Puppets.

him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should return, and, having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

[DR. JOHNSON AND GEORGE III]

In February, 1767, there happened one of the most remarkable incidents of Johnson's life, which gratified his monarchical enthusiasm, and which he loved to relate, with all its circumstances, when requested by his friends. This was his being honored by a private conversation with his Majesty, in the library at the Queen's house. He had frequently visited those splendid rooms and noble collection of books, which he used to say was more numerous and curious than he supposed any person could have made in the time which the king had employed. Mr. Barnard, the librarian, took care that he should have every accommodation that could contribute to his ease and convenience, while indulging his literary taste in that place, so that he had here a very agreeable resource at leisure hours.

His Majesty, having been informed of his occasional visits, was pleased to signify a desire that he should be told when Dr. Johnson next came to the library. Accordingly, the next time that Johnson did come, as soon as he was fairly engaged with a book, on which, while he sat by the fire, he seemed quite intent, Mr. Barnard stole round to the apartment where the king was, and, in obedience to his Majesty's commands, mentioned that Dr. Johnson was then in the library. His Majesty said he was at leisure, and would go to him; upon which Mr. Barnard took one of the candles that stood on the king's table, and lighted his Majesty through a suite of rooms, till they came to a private door into the library, of which his Majesty had the key. Being entered, Mr. Barnard stepped forward hastily to Dr. Johnson, who was still in a profound study, and whispered him, "Sir, here is the King." Johnson started up, and stood still. His Majesty approached him, and at once was courteously easy.

His Majesty began by observing that he understood he came sometimes to the library, and then, mentioning his having

heard that the Doctor had been lately at Oxford, asked him if he was not fond of going thither. To which Johnson answered that he was indeed fond of going to Oxford sometimes, but was likewise glad to come back again. The king then asked him what they were doing at Oxford. Johnson answered, he could not much commend their diligence, but that in some respects they were mended, for they had put their press under better regulations, and were at that time printing Polybius. He was then asked whether there were better libraries at Oxford or Cambridge. He answered, he believed the Bodleian was larger than any they had at Cambridge, at the same time adding, "I hope, whether we have more books or not than they have at Cambridge, we shall make as good use of them as they do." Being asked whether All Souls or Christ Church library was the largest, he answered, "All Souls library is the largest we have, except the Bodleian." "Ay," said the king, "that is the public library."

His Majesty inquired if he was then writing anything. He answered he was not, for he had pretty well told the world what he knew, and must now read to acquire more knowledge. The king, as it should seem with a view to urge him to rely on his own stores as an original writer, and to continue his labors, then said, "I do not think you borrow much from anybody." Johnson said he thought he had already done his part as a writer. "I should have thought so too," said the king, "if you had not written so well." Johnson observed to me, upon this, that "no man could have paid a handsomer compliment, and it was fit for a king to pay. It was decisive." When asked by another friend, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, whether he made any reply to this high compliment, he answered, "No, sir. When the king had said it, it was to be so. It was not for me to bandy civilities with my sovereign." Perhaps no man who had spent his whole life in courts could have shown a more nice and dignified sense of true politeness than Johnson did in this instance. . . .

The king then talked of literary journals, mentioned particularly the *Journal des Savans*, and asked Johnson if it was well done. Johnson said it was formerly very well done, and gave some account of the persons who began it and carried it on for some years, enlarging, at the same time, on the nature and use of such works. The king asked him if it was well done now.



Johnson answered he had no reason to think that it was. The king then asked him if there were any other literary journals published in this kingdom, except the *Monthly* and *Critical Reviews*; and on being answered there was no other, his Majesty asked which of them was the best. Johnson answered that the *Monthly Review* was done with most care, the *Critical* upon the best principles; adding that the authors of the *Monthly Review* were enemies to the Church. This the king said he was sorry to hear.

The conversation next turned on the Philosophical Transactions, when Johnson observed that they had now a better method of arranging their materials than formerly. "Ay," said the king, "they are obliged to Dr. Johnson for that"; for his Majesty had heard and remembered the circumstance, which Johnson himself had forgot.

His Majesty expressed a desire to have the literary biography of this country ably executed, and proposed to Dr. Johnson to undertake it. Johnson signified his readiness to comply with his Majesty's wishes.

During the whole of this interview, Johnson talked to his Majesty with profound respect, but still in his firm, manly manner, with a sonorous voice, and never in that subdued tone which is commonly used at the levee and in the drawing-room. After the king withdrew, Johnson showed himself highly pleased with his Majesty's conversation and gracious behavior. He said to Mr. Barnard, "Sir, they may talk of the king as they will; but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen." And he afterwards observed to Mr. Langton, "Sir, his manners are those of as fine a gentleman as we may suppose Louis the Fourteenth or Charles the Second."

#### [THE CLUB]

On Friday, April 30,<sup>1</sup> I dined with him at Mr. Beauclerk's, where were Lord Charlemont, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and some more members of the Literary Club, whom he had obligingly invited to meet me, as I was this evening to be balloted for as candidate for admission into that distinguished society. Johnson had done me the honor to propose me, and Beauclerk was very zealous for me.

<sup>1</sup> 1773.

Goldsmith being mentioned, JOHNSON: "It is amazing how little Goldsmith knows. He seldom comes where he is not more ignorant than any one else." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS: "Yet there is no man whose company is more liked." JOHNSON: "To be sure, sir. When people find a man of the most distinguished abilities as a writer, their inferior while he is with them, it must be highly gratifying to them. What Goldsmith comically says of himself is very true, — he always gets the better when he argues alone; meaning, that he is master of a subject in his study, and can write well upon it; but when he comes into company, grows confused and unable to talk. Take him as a poet, his *Traveler* is a very fine performance; ay, and so is his *Deserted Village*, were it not sometimes too much the echo of his *Traveler*. Whether, indeed, we take him as a poet, as a comic writer, or as an historian, he stands in the first class." BOSWELL: "An historian! My dear sir, you surely will not rank his compilation of the Roman History with the works of other historians of this age?" JOHNSON: "Why, who are before him?" BOSWELL: "Hume, — Robertson, — Lord Lyttleton." JOHNSON (his antipathy to the Scotch beginning to rise): "I have not read Hume; but doubtless Goldsmith's History is better than the verbiage of Robertson or the foppery of Dalrymple. . . . Sir, he has the art of compiling, and of saying everything he has to say in a pleasing manner. He is now writing a *Natural History*, and will make it as entertaining as a Persian Tale." . . .

The gentlemen went away to their club, and I was left at Beaucierk's till the fate of my election should be announced to me. I sat in a state of anxiety which even the charming conversation of Lady Di Beauclerk could not entirely dissipate. In a short time I received the agreeable intelligence that I was chosen. I hastened to the place of meeting, and was introduced to such a society as can seldom be found: Mr. Edmund Burke, whom I then saw for the first time, and whose splendid talents had long made me ardently wish for his acquaintance; Dr. Nugent, Mr. Garrick, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Jones, and the company with whom I had dined. Upon my entrance, Johnson placed himself behind a chair, on which he leaned as on a desk or pulpit, and with humorous formality gave me a *charge*, pointing out the conduct expected from me as a good member of this club.

. . . During this argument, Goldsmith sat in restless agitation, from a wish to get in and *shine*. Finding himself excluded, he had taken his hat to go away, but remained for some time with it in his hand, like a gamester who, at the close of a long night, lingers for a little while, to see if he can have a favorable opening to finish with success. Once when he was beginning to speak, he found himself overpowered by the loud voice of Johnson, who was at the opposite end of the table, and did not perceive Goldsmith's attempt. Thus disappointed of his wish to obtain the attention of the company, Goldsmith in a passion threw down his hat, looking angrily at Johnson, and exclaimed in a bitter tone, "*Take it.*" When Toplady was going to speak, Johnson uttered some sound which led Goldsmith to think he was beginning again and taking the words from Toplady. Upon which, he seized this opportunity of venting his own envy and spleen, under the pretext of supporting another person. "Sir," said he to Johnson, "the gentleman has heard you patiently for an hour; pray allow us now to hear him." JOHNSON (sternly): "Sir, I was not interrupting the gentleman. I was only giving him a signal of my intention. Sir, you are impertinent." Goldsmith made no reply, but continued in the company for some time. . . .

[Johnson] and Mr. Langton and I went together to the Club, where we found Mr. Burke, Mr. Garrick, and some other members, and amongst them our friend Goldsmith, who sat silently brooding over Johnson's reprimand to him after dinner. Johnson perceived this, and said aside to some of us, "I'll make Goldsmith forgive me"; and then called to him in a loud voice, "Dr. Goldsmith, something passed to-day where you and I dined; I ask your pardon." Goldsmith answered placidly, "It must be much from you, sir, that I take ill." And so at once the difference was over, and they were on as easy terms as ever, and Goldsmith rattled away as usual.

[DR. JOHNSON AND MACPHERSON]

*Mr. Boswell to Dr. Johnson*

EDINBURGH, Feb. 2, 1775.

As to Macpherson, I am anxious to have from yourself a full and pointed account of what has passed between you and him. It is confidently told here that, before your book came out, he sent to you to let you know that



he understood you meant to deny the authenticity of Ossian's poems; that the originals were in his possession; that you might have inspection of them, and might take the evidence of people skilled in the Erse language; and that he hoped, after this fair offer, you would not be so uncandid as to assert that he had refused reasonable proof. That you paid no regard to his message, but published your strong attack upon him; and then he wrote a letter to you, in such terms as he thought suited to one who had not acted as a man of veracity. You may believe it gives me pain to hear your conduct represented as unfavorable, while I can only deny what is said on the ground that your character refutes it, without having any information to oppose. Let me, I beg it of you, be furnished with a sufficient answer to any calumny upon this occasion. . . .

*To James Boswell, Esq.*

MY DEAR BOSWELL: I am surprised that, knowing as you do the disposition of your countrymen to tell lies in favor of each other, you can be at all affected by any reports that circulate among them. Macpherson never in his life offered me a sight of any original or of any evidence of any kind, but thought only of intimidating me by noise and threats, till my last answer — that I would not be deterred from detecting what I thought a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian — put an end to our correspondence.

The state of the question is this. He and Dr. Blair, whom I consider as deceived, say that he copied the poem from old manuscripts. His copies, if he had them, and I believe him to have none, are nothing. Where are the manuscripts? They can be shown if they exist, but they were never shown. *De non existentibus et non apparentibus*, says our law, *eadem est ratio*.<sup>1</sup> No man has a claim to credit upon his own word, when better evidence, if he had it, may be easily produced. But so far as we can find, the Erse language was never written till very lately for the purposes of religion. A nation that cannot write, or a language that was never written, has no manuscripts.

But whatever he has he never offered to show. If old manuscripts should now be mentioned, I should, unless there were more evidence than can be easily had, suppose them another proof of Scotch conspiracy in national falsehood.

Do not censure the expression; you know it to be true. . . .

I am now engaged, but in a little time I hope to do all you would have. My compliments to Madam and Veronica.

I am, sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

February 7, 1775.

What words were used by Mr. Macpherson in his letter to the venerable sage, I have never heard; but they are generally said to have been of a nature very different from the language

<sup>1</sup> "The same account is to be taken of things which do not appear as of those which do not exist."

of literary contest. Dr. Johnson's answer appeared in the newspapers of the day, and has since been frequently republished, but not with perfect accuracy. I give it as dictated to me by himself, written down in his presence, and authenticated by a note in his own handwriting, "This, I think, is a true copy."

MR. JAMES MACPHERSON,

I received your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered me I shall do my best to repel; and what I cannot do for myself, the law shall do for me. I hope I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian.

What would you have me retract? I thought your book an imposture; I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons to the public, which I here dare you to refute. Your rage I defy. Your abilities, since your *Homer*, are not so formidable, and what I hear of your morals inclines me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will.

SAM. JOHNSON.

Mr. Macpherson little knew the character of Dr. Johnson, if he supposed that he could be easily intimidated; for no man was ever more remarkable for personal courage. He had, indeed, an awful dread of death, or rather "of something after death"; and what rational man, who seriously thinks of quitting all that he has ever known, and going into a new and unknown state of being, can be without that dread? But his fear was from reflection; his courage natural. His fear, in that one instance, was the result of philosophical and religious consideration. He feared death, but he feared nothing else, not even what might occasion death. . . . Foote, who so successfully revived the old comedy by exhibiting living characters, had resolved to imitate Johnson on the stage, expecting great profits from the ridicule of so celebrated a man. Johnson being informed of his intention, and being at dinner at Mr. Thomas Davies's, the bookseller, from whom I had the story, he asked Mr. Davies what was the common price of an oak stick; and being answered sixpence, "Why then, sir," said he, "give me leave to send your servant to purchase me a shilling one. I'll have a double quantity; for I am told Foote means to take me off, as he calls it, and I am determined the fellow shall not do it with impunity." Davies took care to acquaint Foote of this, which effectually checked the wantonness of the mimic. Mr. Macpherson's menaces made Johnson provide himself with the same implement of

defense; and had he been attacked, I have no doubt that, old as he was, he would have made his corporal prowess be felt as much as his intellectual.

[THE DINNER AT THE MESSRS. DILLY'S]

My desire of being acquainted with celebrated men of every description had made me, much about the same time, obtain an introduction to Dr. Samuel Johnson and to John Wilkes, Esq. Two men more different could perhaps not be selected out of mankind. They had even attacked one another with some asperity in their writings; yet I lived in habits of friendship with both. I could fully relish the excellence of each, for I have ever delighted in that intellectual chemistry which can separate good qualities from evil in the same person. . . . I conceived an irresistible wish, if possible, to bring Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wilkes together. How to manage it was a nice and difficult matter.

My worthy booksellers and friends, Messieurs Dilly in the Poultry, at whose hospitable and well-covered table I have seen a greater number of literary men than at any other, except that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, had invited me to meet Mr. Wilkes and some other gentlemen, on Wednesday, May 15.<sup>1</sup> "Pray," said I, "let us have Dr. Johnson." "What, with Mr. Wilkes? Not for the world," said Mr. Edward Dilly; "Dr. Johnson would never forgive me." "Come," said I, "if you'll let me negotiate for you, I will be answerable that all shall go well." DILLY: "Nay, if you will take it upon you, I am sure I shall be very happy to see them both here."

Notwithstanding the high veneration which I entertained for Dr. Johnson, I was sensible that he was sometimes a little actuated by the spirit of contradiction, and by means of that I hoped I should gain my point. I was persuaded that if I had come upon him with a direct proposal, "Sir, will you dine in company with Jack Wilkes?" he would have flown into a passion, and would probably have answered, "Dine with Jack Wilkes? Sir, I'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch." I therefore, while we were sitting quietly by ourselves at his house in an evening, took occasion to open my plan thus: "Mr. Dilly, sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honor to dine with him on Wednesday next along with me, as I must

<sup>1</sup> 1776.



soon go to Scotland." JOHNSON: "Sir, I am obliged to Mr. Dilly. I will wait upon him." BOSWELL: "Provided, sir, I suppose, that the company which he is to have is agreeable to you?" JOHNSON: "What do you mean, sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?" BOSWELL: "I beg your pardon, sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like. Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his patriotic friends with him." JOHNSON: "Well, sir, and what then? What care *I* for his 'patriotic friends'? Poh!" BOSWELL: "I should not be surprised to find Jack Wilkes there." JOHNSON: "And if Jack Wilkes *should* be there, what is that to *me*, sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be angry with you, but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could not meet any company whatever, occasionally." BOSWELL: "Pray forgive me, sir, I meant well. But you shall meet whoever comes, for me." Thus I secured him, and told Dilly that he would find him very well pleased to be one of his guests on the day appointed.

Upon the much expected Wednesday, I called on him about half an hour before dinner, as I often did when we were to dine out together, to see that he was ready in time, and to accompany him. . . .

When we entered Mr. Dilly's drawing-room, he found himself in the midst of a company he did not know. I kept myself snug and silent, watching how he would conduct himself. I observed him whispering to Mr. Dilly, "Who is that gentleman, sir?" "Mr. Arthur Lee." JOHNSON: "Too, too, too" (under his breath), which was one of his habitual mutterings. Mr. Arthur Lee could not but be very obnoxious to Johnson, for he was not only a "patriot" but an American. He was afterwards minister from the United States at the court of Madrid. "And who is the gentleman in lace?" "Mr. Wilkes, sir." This information confounded him still more; he had some difficulty to restrain himself, and, taking up a book, sat down upon a window-seat and read, or at least kept his eye intently upon it for some time, till he composed himself. His feelings, I dare say, were awkward enough. But he no doubt recollected having rated me for supposing that he could be at all disconcerted by any company, and

he therefore resolutely set himself to behave quite as an easy man of the world, who could adapt himself at once to the disposition and manners of those whom he might chance to meet.

The cheering sound of "Dinner is upon the table" dissolved his reveries, and we all sat down without any symptom of ill-humor. There were present — beside Mr. Wilkes, and Mr. Arthur Lee, who was an old companion of mine when he studied physic at Edinburgh — Mr. (now Sir John) Miller, Dr. Lettsom, and Mr. Slater the druggist. Mr. Wilkes placed himself next to Dr. Johnson, and behaved to him with so much attention and politeness that he gained upon him insensibly. No man eat more heartily than Johnson, or loved better what was nice and delicate. Mr. Wilkes was very assiduous in helping him to some fine veal. "Pray give me leave, sir; — It is better here — A little of the brown — Some fat, sir — A little of the stuffing — Some gravy — Let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter — Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange; or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest." "Sir, sir, I am obliged to you, sir," cried Johnson, bowing, and turning his head to him with a look for some time of "surly virtue,"<sup>1</sup> but in a short while of complacency. . . .

I attended Dr. Johnson home, and had the satisfaction to hear him tell Mrs. Williams how much he had been pleased with Mr. Wilkes's company, and what an agreeable day he had passed.

#### [THE LIVES OF THE POETS]

In 1781 Johnson at last completed his *Lives of the Poets*, of which he gives this account: "Some time in March I finished *The Lives of the Poets*, which I wrote in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work, and working with vigor and haste." In a memorandum previous to this, he says of them: "Written, I hope, in such a manner as may tend to the promotion of piety."

This is the work which, of all Dr. Johnson's writings, will perhaps be read most generally, and with most pleasure. Philology and biography were his favorite pursuits, and those who lived most in intimacy with him heard him upon all occasions, when there was a proper opportunity, take delight in expati-

<sup>1</sup> A phrase from Johnson's *London*.

ating upon the various merits of the English poets, — upon the niceties of their characters, and the events of their progress through the world which they contribute to illuminate. His mind was so full of that kind of information, and it was so well arranged in his memory, that in performing what he had undertaken in this way, he had little more to do than to put his thoughts upon paper, exhibiting first each poet's life, and then subjoining a critical examination of his genius and works. But when he began to write, the subject swelled in such a manner that, instead of prefaces to each poet of no more than a few pages, as he had originally intended, he produced an ample, rich, and most entertaining view of them in every respect. . . . The booksellers, justly sensible of the great additional value of the copyright, presented him with another hundred pounds, over and above two hundred, for which his agreement was to furnish such prefaces as he thought fit.

This was, however, but a small recompense for such a collection of biography, and such principles and illustrations of criticism as, if digested and arranged by some modern Aristotle or Longinus, might form a code upon that subject, such as no other nation can show. As he was so good as to make me a present of the greatest part of the original and indeed only manuscript of this admirable work, I have an opportunity of observing with wonder the correctness with which he rapidly struck off such glowing composition. He may be assimilated to the Lady in Waller, who could impress with "Love at first sight": —

Some other nymphs with colors faint,  
And pencil slow, may Cupid paint,  
And a weak heart in time destroy;  
She has a stamp, and prints the boy.

. . . While the world in general was filled with admiration of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, there were narrow circles in which prejudice and resentment were fostered, and from which attacks of different sorts issued against him. By some violent Whigs he was arraigned of injustice to Milton; by some Cambridge men of depreciating Gray; and his expressing with a dignified freedom what he really thought of George Lord Lyttelton, gave offense to some of the friends of that nobleman, and particularly produced a declaration of war against him from Mrs. Montagu, the ingenious essayist on Shakespeare, between



whom and his lordship a commerce of reciprocal compliments had long been carried on. In this war the smallest powers in alliance with him were of course led to engage, at least on the defensive, and thus I for one was excluded from the enjoyment of "A Feast for Reason," such as Mr. Cumberland has described, with a keen yet just and delicate pen, in his *Observer*. These minute inconveniences gave not the least disturbance to Johnson. He nobly said, when I talked to him of the feeble though shrill outcry which had been raised, "Sir, I considered myself as entrusted with a certain portion of truth. I have given my opinion sincerely; let them show where they think me wrong."

## [MISCELLANEA]

After his return to London from this excursion, I saw him frequently, but have few memorandums; I shall therefore here insert some particulars which I have collected at various times. . . .

It having been mentioned to Dr. Johnson that a gentleman who had a son whom he imagined to have an extreme degree of timidity, resolved to send him to a public school, that he might acquire confidence, — "Sir," said Johnson, "this is a preposterous expedient for removing his infirmity; such a disposition should be cultivated in the shade. Placing him at a public school is forcing an owl upon day." . . .

A dull country magistrate gave Johnson a long tedious account of his exercising his criminal jurisdiction, the result of which was his having sentenced four convicts to transportation. Johnson, in an agony of impatience to get rid of such a companion, exclaimed, "I heartily wish, sir, that I were a fifth."

Johnson was present when a tragedy was read in which there occurred this line:—

Who rules o'er freemen should himself be free.

The company having admired it much, — "I cannot agree with you," said Johnson; "it might as well be said, —

Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat."

. . . Johnson having argued for some time with a pertinacious gentleman, his opponent, who had talked in a very puzzling manner, happened to say, "I don't understand you, sir":

upon which Johnson observed, "Sir, I have found you an argument, but I am not obliged to find you an understanding."

. . . He disapproved of Lord Hailes for having modernized the language of the ever memorable John Hales of Eton, in an edition which his lordship published of that writer's works. "An author's language, sir," said he, "is a characteristic part of his composition, and is also characteristic of the age in which he writes. Besides, sir, when the language is changed we are not sure that the sense is the same. No, sir; I am sorry Lord Hailes has done this."

Here it may be observed that his frequent use of the expression *No, sir*, was not always to intimate contradiction; for he would say so when he was about to enforce an affirmative proposition which had not been denied, as in the instance last mentioned. I used to consider it as a kind of flag of defiance, as if he had said, "Any argument you may offer against this is not just. No, sir, it is not." It was like Falstaff's "I deny your major."

Sir Joshua Reynolds having said that he took the altitude of a man's taste by his stories and his wit, and of his understanding by the remarks that he repeated, being always sure that he must be a weak man who quotes common things with an emphasis as if they were oracles, Johnson agreed with him; and Sir Joshua having also observed that the real character of a man was found out by his amusements, Johnson added, "Yes, sir; no man is a hypocrite in his pleasures."

I have mentioned Johnson's general aversion to pun. He once, however, endured one of mine. When we were talking of a numerous company in which he had distinguished himself highly, I said, "Sir, you were a cod surrounded by smelts. Is not this enough for you? at a time too when you were not *fishing* for a compliment?" He laughed at this with a complacent approbation. Old Mr. Sheridan observed, upon my mentioning it to him, "He liked your compliment so well, he was willing to take it with *pun sauce*." For my own part, I think no innocent species of wit or pleasantry should be suppressed, and that a good pun may be admitted among the smaller excellencies of lively conversation. . . .

When I pointed out to him in the newspaper one of Mr. Grattan's animated and glowing speeches, in favor of the freedom of Ireland, in which this expression occurred (I know not if accu-

rately taken): "We will persevere till there is not one link of the English chain left to clank upon the rags of the meanest beggar in Ireland," — "Nay, sir," said Johnson, "don't you perceive that *one* link cannot clank?" . . .

It may be worth remarking, among the *minutiæ* of my collection, that Johnson was once drawn to serve in the militia, the Trained Bands of the city of London, and that Mr. Rackstrow, of the Museum in Fleet Street, was his colonel. It may be believed he did not serve in person; but the idea, with all its circumstances, is certainly laughable. He upon that occasion provided himself with a musket, and with a sword and belt, which I have seen hanging in his closet.

He was very constant to those whom he once employed, if they gave him no reason to be displeased. When somebody talked of being imposed on in the purchase of tea and sugar, and such articles, "That will not be the case," said he, "if you go to a *stately shop*, as I always do. In such a shop it is not worth their while to take a petty advantage."

An author of most anxious and restless vanity being mentioned, "Sir," said he, "there is not a young sapling upon Parnassus more severely blown about by every wind of criticism than that poor fellow."

The difference, he observed, between a well-bred and an ill-bred man is this: "One immediately attracts your liking, the other your aversion. You love the one till you find reason to hate him; you hate the other till you find reason to love him."

The wife of one of his acquaintance had fraudulently made a purse for herself out of her husband's fortune. Feeling a proper compunction in her last moments, she confessed how much she had secreted; but before she could tell where it was placed, she was seized with a convulsive fit and expired. Her husband said he was more hurt by her want of confidence in him than by the loss of his money. "I told him," said Johnson, "that he should console himself; for *perhaps* the money might be found, and he was *sure* that his wife was gone."

A foppish physician once reminded Johnson of his having been in company with him on a former occasion. "I do not remember it, sir." The physician still insisted, adding that he that day wore so fine a coat that it must have attracted his notice.



"Sir," said Johnson, "had you been dipped in Pactolus, I should not have noticed you."

He seemed to take a pleasure in speaking in his own style; for when he had carelessly missed it, he would repeat the thought translated into it. Talking of the comedy of *The Rehearsal*, he said, "It has not wit enough to keep it sweet." This was easy; he therefore caught himself, and pronounced a more round sentence: "It has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction."

He censured a writer of entertaining travels for assuming a feigned character, saying (in his sense of the word), "He carries out one lie; we know not how many he brings back." At another time, talking of the same person, he observed, "Sir, your assent to a man whom you have never known to falsify, is a debt; but after you have known a man to falsify, your assent to him then is a favor." . . .

When I observed to him that painting was so far inferior to poetry, that the story or even emblem which it communicates must be previously known; and mentioned, as a laughable instance of this, that a little miss, on seeing a picture of Justice with the scales, had exclaimed to me, "See, there's a woman selling sweetmeats," he said, "Painting, sir, can illustrate, but cannot inform."

No man was more ready to make an apology, when he had censured unjustly, than Johnson. When a proof-sheet of one of his works was brought to him, he found fault with the mode in which a part of it was arranged, refused to read it, and in a passion desired that the compositor might be sent to him. The compositor was Mr. Manning, a decent, sensible man, who had composed about one half of his Dictionary, when in Mr. Strahan's printing-house, and a great part of his *Lives of the Poets*, when in that of Mr. Nichols, and who (in his seventy-seventh year), when in Mr. Baldwin's printing-house, composed a part of the first edition of this work concerning him. By producing the manuscript he at once satisfied Dr. Johnson that he was not to blame. Upon which Johnson candidly and earnestly said to him, "Mr. Compositor, I ask your pardon; Mr. Compositor, I ask your pardon again and again."

His generous humanity to the miserable was almost beyond example. The following instance is well attested. Coming home

late one night, he found a poor woman lying in the street so much exhausted that she could not walk. He took her upon his back, and carried her to his house, when he discovered that she was one of those wretched females who had fallen into the lowest state of vice, poverty, and disease. Instead of harshly upbraiding her, he had her taken care of with all tenderness for a long time, at a considerable expense, till she was restored to health, and endeavored to put her into a virtuous way of living.

[CONCLUSION]

The character of Samuel Johnson has, I trust, been so developed in the course of this work, that they who have honored it with a perusal may be considered as well acquainted with him. As, however, it may be expected that I should collect into one view the capital and distinguishing features of this extraordinary man, I shall endeavor to acquit myself of that part of my biographical undertaking, however difficult it may be to do that which many of my readers will do better for themselves.

His figure was large and well formed, and his countenance of the cast of an ancient statue; yet his appearance was rendered strange and somewhat uncouth by convulsive cramps, by the scars of that distemper which it was once imagined the royal touch could cure, and by a slovenly mode of dress. He had the use only of one eye; yet so much does mind govern and even supply the deficiency of organs, that his visual perceptions, as far as they extended, were uncommonly quick and accurate. So morbid was his temperament that he never knew the natural joy of a free and vigorous use of his limbs; when he walked, it was like the struggling gait of one in fetters; when he rode, he had no command or direction of his horse, but was carried as if in a balloon. That with his constitution and habits of life he should have lived seventy-five years is a proof that an inherent *visida vis* is a powerful preservative of the human frame.

Man is, in general, made up of contradictory qualities; and these will ever show themselves in strange succession where a consistency, in appearance at least, if not reality, has not been attained by long habits of philosophical discipline. In proportion to the native vigor of the mind, the contradictory qualities will be the more prominent, and more difficult to be adjusted; and therefore we are not to wonder that Johnson exhibited an

eminent example of this remark which I have made upon human nature. At different times he seemed a different man, in some respects; not, however, in any great or essential article, upon which he fully employed his mind, and settled certain principles of duty, but only in his manners, and in the display of argument and fancy in his talk. He was prone to superstition, but not to credulity. Though his imagination might incline him to a belief of the marvelous and the mysterious, his vigorous reason examined the evidence with jealousy. He was a sincere and zealous Christian, of high Church-of-England and monarchical principles, which he would not tamely suffer to be questioned; and had, perhaps, at an early period narrowed his mind too much, both as to religion and politics. His being impressed with the danger of extreme latitude in either, though he was of a very independent spirit, occasioned his appearing somewhat unfavorable to the prevalence of that noble freedom of sentiment which is the best possession of man. Nor can it be denied that he had many prejudices, which, however, frequently suggested many of his pointed sayings, that rather show a playfulness of fancy than any settled malignity. He was steady and inflexible in maintaining the obligations of religion and morality, both from a regard for the order of society, and from a veneration for the Great Source of all order; correct, nay, stern in his taste; hard to please, and easily offended; impetuous and irritable in his temper, but of a most humane and benevolent heart, which showed itself not only in a most liberal charity, as far as his circumstances would allow, but in a thousand instances of active benevolence. He was afflicted with a bodily disease which made him often restless and fretful, and with a constitutional melancholy, the clouds of which darkened the brightness of his fancy and gave a gloomy cast to his whole course of thinking; we therefore ought not to wonder at his sallies of impatience and passion at any time, especially when provoked by obtrusive ignorance or presuming petulance; and allowance must be made for his uttering hasty and satirical sallies even against his best friends. And surely, when it is considered that "amidst sickness and sorrow" he exerted his faculties in so many works for the benefit of mankind, and particularly that he achieved the great and admirable Dictionary of our language, we must be astonished at his resolution. The sol-



emn text, "Of him to whom much is given much will be required," seems to have been ever present to his mind, in a rigorous sense, and to have made him dissatisfied with his labors and acts of goodness, however comparatively great; so that the unavoidable consciousness of his superiority was, in that respect, a cause of disquiet. He suffered so much from this, and from the gloom which perpetually haunted him and made solitude frightful, that it may be said of him, "If in this life only he had hope, he was of all men most miserable." He loved praise, when it was brought to him, but was too proud to seek for it. He was somewhat susceptible of flattery. As he was general and unconfined in his studies, he cannot be considered as master of any one particular science; but he had accumulated a vast and various collection of learning and knowledge, which was so arranged in his mind as to be ever in readiness to be brought forth. But his superiority over other learned men consisted chiefly in what may be called the art of thinking, the art of using his mind,—a certain continual power of seizing the useful substance of all that he knew, and exhibiting it in a clear and forcible manner; so that knowledge, which we often see to be no better than lumber in men of dull understanding, was in him true, evident, and actual wisdom. His moral precepts are practical, for they are drawn from an intimate acquaintance with human nature. His maxims carry conviction, for they are founded on the basis of common sense, and a very attentive and minute survey of real life. His mind was so full of imagery that he might have been perpetually a poet; yet it is remarkable that, however rich his prose is in this respect, his poetical pieces in general have not much of that splendor, but are rather distinguished by strong sentiment and acute observation, conveyed in harmonious and energetic verse, particularly heroic couplets. Though usually grave and even awful in his deportment, he possessed uncommon and peculiar powers of wit and humor; he frequently indulged himself in colloquial pleasantry, and the heartiest merriment was often enjoyed in his company; with this great advantage, that it was entirely free from any poisonous tincture of vice and impiety,—it was salutary to those who shared in it. He had accustomed himself to such accuracy in his common conversation, that he at all times expressed his thoughts with great force, and an elegant choice of language, the effect of

which was aided by his having a loud voice and a slow, deliberate utterance. In him were united a most logical head with a most fertile imagination, which gave him an extraordinary advantage in arguing; for he could reason close or wide, as he saw best for the moment. Exulting in his intellectual strength and dexterity, he could, when he pleased, be the greatest sophist that ever contended in the lists of declamation; and, from a spirit of contradiction and a delight in showing his powers, he would often maintain the wrong side with equal warmth and ingenuity; so that when there was an audience, his real opinions could seldom be gathered from his talk, though when he was in company with a single friend he would discuss a subject with genuine fairness. But he was too conscientious to make error permanent and pernicious by deliberately writing it; and in all his numerous works he earnestly inculcated what appeared to him to be the truth, his piety being constant, and the ruling principle of all his conduct.

Such was Samuel Johnson, a man whose talents, acquirements, and virtues were so extraordinary that the more his character is considered, the more he will be regarded by the present age, and by posterity, with admiration and reverence.

WILLIAM GODWIN  
AN INQUIRY CONCERNING POLITICAL JUSTICE  
AND ITS INFLUENCE ON GENERAL VIRTUE AND  
HAPPINESS

1793

[This work, the chief theoretical representative in England of the "spirit of 1789," had a large sale and exerted no little influence, even after the time when Godwin himself had modified his earlier views. The extracts reprinted below represent some of the more famous instances of the author's radicalism; the student should perhaps be cautioned not to consider them as altogether typical of the tenor of the work as a whole. They are from Book II, chap. VI; Book III, chapters V and VI; Book V, chap. XI; and Book VIII, chap. VI.]

THE EXERCISE OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT

... PUNISHMENT is not the appropriate mode of correcting the errors of mankind. It will probably be admitted that the only true end of punishment is correction. That question will be discussed in another part of the present inquiry. I have done something which, though wrong in itself, I believe to be right; or I have done something which I usually admit to be wrong; but my conviction upon the subject is not so clear and forcible as to prevent my yielding to a powerful temptation. There can be no doubt that the proper way of conveying to my understanding a truth of which I am ignorant, or of impressing upon me a firmer persuasion of a truth with which I am acquainted, is by an appeal to my reason. Even an angry expostulation with me upon my conduct will but excite similar passions in me, and cloud instead of illuminate my understanding. There is certainly a way of expressing truth with such benevolence as to command attention, and such evidence as to enforce conviction in all cases whatever.

Punishment inevitably excites in the sufferer, and ought to excite, a sense of injustice. Let its purpose be to convince me of the truth of a proposition which I at present believe to be false. It is not abstractedly considered of the nature of an argument,



and therefore it cannot begin with producing conviction. Punishment is a specious name, but is in reality nothing more than force put upon one being by another who happens to be stronger. Now strength apparently does not constitute justice, nor ought "might," according to a trite proverb, to "overcome right." The case of punishment, which we are now considering, is the case of you and I differing in opinion, and your telling me that you must be right, since you have a more brawny arm, or have applied your mind more to the acquiring skill in your weapons than I have.

But let us suppose that I am convinced of my error, but that my conviction is superficial and fluctuating, and the object you propose is to render it durable and profound. Ought it to be thus durable and profound? There are no doubt arguments and reasons calculated to render it so. Is it in reality problematical, and do you wish by the weight of your blows to make up for the deficiency of your logic? This can never be defended. An appeal to force must appear to both parties, in proportion to the soundness of their understanding, to be a confession of imbecility. He that has recourse to it would have no occasion for this expedient, if he were sufficiently acquainted with the powers of that truth it is his office to communicate. If there be any man who, in suffering punishment, is not conscious of injustice, he must have had his mind previously debased by slavery, and his sense of moral right and wrong blunted by a series of oppression. . . .

Notwithstanding all these objections, it would be difficult to find a country respecting which we could say that the inhabitants might with safety be dismissed from the operation of punishment. So mixed is human character, so wild are its excursions, so calamitous and detestable are the errors into which it occasionally falls, that something more than argument seems necessary for their suppression. Human beings are such tyros in the art of reasoning, that the wisest of us often prove impotent in our attempts, where an instant effect was most powerfully wanted. While I stand still to reason with the thief, the assassin, or the oppressor, they hasten to new scenes of devastation, and with unsparing violence confound all the principles of human society. I should obtain little success by the abolition of punishment, unless I could at the same time abolish those causes that generate temptation and make punishment necessary. Meanwhile the arguments already adduced may be

sufficient to show that punishment is always an evil, and to persuade us never to recur to it but from the most evident necessity.

#### LEGISLATION — OBEDIENCE

Having thus far investigated the nature of political functions, it seems necessary that some explanation should be given in this place upon the subject of legislation. Who is it that has the authority to make laws? What are the characteristics by which that man or body of men is to be known, in whom the faculty is vested of legislating for the rest?

To these questions the answer is exceedingly simple: legislation, as it has been usually understood, is not an affair of human competence. Reason is the only legislator, and her decrees are irrevocable and uniform. The functions of society extend not to the making, but the interpreting of law; it cannot decree; it can only declare that which the nature of things has already decreed, and the propriety of which irresistibly flows from the circumstances of the case. Montesquieu says that "in a free state every man will be his own legislator." This is not true, setting apart the functions of the community, unless in the limited sense already explained. It is the office of conscience to determine, "not like an Asiatic *cadi*, according to the ebbs and flows of his own passions, but like a British judge, who makes no new law, but faithfully declares that law which he finds already written."

The same distinction is to be made upon the subject of authority. All political power is, strictly speaking, executive. It has appeared to be necessary, with respect to men as we at present find them, that force should sometimes be employed in repressing injustice; and for the same reasons it appears that this force should as far as possible be vested in the community. To the public support of justice, therefore, the authority of the community extends. But no sooner does it wander in the smallest degree from the great line of justice, than its authority is at an end; it stands upon a level with the obscurest individual, and every man is bound to resist its decisions.

. . . The object of government, as has been already demonstrated, is the exertion of force. Now force can never be regarded as an appeal to the understanding; and therefore obe-

dience, which is an act of the understanding or will, can have no legitimate connection with it. I am bound to submit to justice and truth, because they approve themselves to my judgment. I am bound to coöperate with government, as far as it appears to me to coincide with these principles. But I submit to government when I think it erroneous, merely because I have no remedy.

No truth can be more simple, at the same time that no truth has been more darkened by the glosses of interested individuals, than that one man can in no case be bound to yield obedience to any other man or set of men upon earth.

There is one rule to which we are universally bound to conform ourselves, justice, — the treating every man precisely as his usefulness and worth demand, — the acting under every circumstance in the manner that shall procure the greatest quantity of general good. When we have done thus, what province is there left to the disposal of obedience? . . .

The abuse of the doctrine of confidence has been the source of more calamities to mankind than all the other errors of the human understanding. Depravity would have gained little ground in the world, if every man had been in the exercise of his independent judgment. The instrument by which extensive mischiefs have in all ages been perpetrated, has been the principle of many men being reduced to mere machines in the hands of a few. Man, while he consults his own understanding, is the ornament of the universe. Man, when he surrenders his reason, and becomes the partisan of implicit faith and passive obedience, is the most mischievous of animals. Ceasing to examine every proposition that comes before him for the direction of his conduct, he is no longer the capable subject of moral instruction. He is, in the instant of submission, the blind instrument of every nefarious purpose of his principal; and, when left to himself, is open to the seduction of injustice, cruelty, and profligacy.

These reasonings lead to a proper explanation of the word *subject*. If by the subject of any government we mean a person whose duty it is to obey, the true inference from the preceding principles is that no government has any subjects. If on the contrary we mean a person whom the government is bound to protect, or may justly restrain, the word is sufficiently admissible.



## MORAL EFFECTS OF ARISTOCRACY

Of all the principles of justice there is none so material to the moral rectitude of mankind as this, that no man can be distinguished but by his personal merit. Why not endeavor to reduce to practice so simple and sublime a lesson? When a man has proved himself a benefactor to the public, when he has already by laudable perseverance cultivated in himself talents which need only encouragement and public favor to bring them to maturity, let that man be honored. In a state of society where fictitious distinctions are unknown, it is impossible he should not be honored. But that a man should be looked up to with servility and awe, because the king has bestowed on him a spurious name, or decorated him with a ribbon; that another should wallow in luxury, because his ancestor three centuries ago bled in the quarrel of Lancaster or York; do we imagine that these iniquities can be practiced without injury?

Let those who entertain this opinion converse a little with the lower orders of mankind. They will perceive that the unfortunate wretch who, with unremitted labor, finds himself incapable adequately to feed and clothe his family, has a sense of injustice rankling at his heart.

One whom distress has spited with the world  
Is he whom tempting fiends would pitch upon  
To do such deeds as make the prosperous men  
Lift up their hands and wonder who could do them.

Such is the education of the human species. Such is the fabric of political society.

But let us suppose that their sense of injustice were less acute than it is here described, what favorable inference can be drawn from that? Is not the injustice real? If the minds of men be so withered and stupefied by the constancy with which it is practiced, that they do not feel the rigor that grinds them into nothing, how does that improve the picture?

Let us for a moment give the reins to reflection, and endeavor accurately to conceive the state of mankind where justice should form the public and general principle. In that case our moral feelings would assume a firm and wholesome tone, for they would not be perpetually counteracted by examples that weakened their energy and confounded their clearness. Men

would be fearless, because they would know that there were no legal snares lying in wait for their lives. They would be courageous, because no man would be pressed to the earth that another might enjoy immoderate luxury, because every one would be secure of the just reward of his industry and prize of his exertions. Jealousy and hatred would cease, for they are the offspring of injustice. Every man would speak truth with his neighbor, for there would be no temptation to falsehood and deceit. Mind would find its level, for there would be everything to encourage and to animate. Science would be unspeakably improved, for understanding would convert into a real power, no longer an *ignis fatuus*, shining and expiring by turns, and leading us into sloughs of sophistry, false science, and specious mistake. All men would be disposed to avow their dispositions and actions; none would endeavor to suppress the just eulogium of his neighbor, for, so long as there were tongues to record, the suppression would be impossible; none fear to detect the misconduct of his neighbor, for there would be no laws converting the sincere expression of our convictions into a libel.

Let us fairly consider for a moment what is the amount of injustice included in the institution of aristocracy. I am born, suppose, a Polish prince, with an income of £300,000 per annum. You are born a manorial serf or a Creolian negro, by the law of your birth attached to the soil, and transferable by barter or otherwise to twenty successive lords. In vain shall be your most generous efforts and your unwearied industry to free yourself from the intolerable yoke. Doomed by the law of your birth to wait at the gates of the palace you must never enter, to sleep under a ruined weather-beaten roof, while your master sleeps under canopies of state, to feed on putrefied offals while the world is ransacked for delicacies for his table, to labor without moderation of limit under a parching sun, while he basks in perpetual sloth, and to be rewarded at last with contempt, reprimand, stripes, and mutilation. In fact the case is worse than this. I could endure all that injustice or caprice could inflict, provided I possessed in the resource of a firm mind the power of looking down with pity on my tyrant, and of knowing that I had that within, — that sacred character of truth, virtue, and fortitude, — which all his injustice could not reach. But a slave and a serf are condemned to stupidity and vice, as well as to calamity.

Is all this nothing? Is all this necessary for the maintenance of civil order? Let it be recollected that for this distinction there is not the smallest foundation in the nature of things; that, as we have already said, there is no particular mold for the construction of lords, and that they are born neither better nor worse than the poorest of their dependents. It is this structure of aristocracy, in all its sanctuaries and fragments, against which reason and philosophy have declared war. It is alike unjust, whether we consider it in the castes of India, the villainage of the feudal system, or the despotism of the patricians of ancient Rome dragging their debtors into personal servitude to expiate loans they could not repay. Mankind will never be in an eminent degree virtuous and happy, till each man shall possess that portion of distinction, and no more, to which he is entitled by his personal merits. The dissolution of aristocracy is equally the interest of the oppressor and the oppressed. The one will be delivered from the littleness of tyranny, and the other from the brutalizing operation of servitude. . . .

#### [EVILS OF MARRIAGE]

. . . It is absurd to expect that the inclinations and wishes of two human beings should coincide through any long period of time. To oblige them to act and to live together is to subject them to some inevitable portion of thwarting, bickering, and unhappiness. This cannot be otherwise, so long as man has failed to reach the standard of absolute perfection. The supposition that I must have a companion for life, is the result of a complication of vices. It is the dictate of cowardice, and not of fortitude. It flows from the desire of being loved and esteemed for something that is not desert.

But the evil of marriage as it is practiced in European countries lies deeper than this. The habit is, for a thoughtless and romantic youth of each sex to come together, to see each other for a few times and under circumstances full of delusion, and then to vow to each other eternal attachment. What is the consequence of this? In almost every instance they find themselves deceived. They are reduced to make the best of an irretrievable mistake. They are presented with the strongest imaginable temptation to become the dupes of falsehood. They are led to conceive it their wisest policy to shut their eyes upon realities,



happy if by any perversion of intellect they can persuade themselves that they were right in their first crude opinion of their companion. The institution of marriage is a system of fraud; and men who carefully mislead their judgments in the daily affair of their life, must always have a crippled judgment in every other concern. We ought to dismiss our mistake as soon as it is detected; but we are taught to cherish it. We ought to be incessant in our search after virtue and worth; but we are taught to check our inquiry, and shut our eyes upon the most attractive and admirable objects. Marriage is law, and the worst of all laws. Whatever our understandings may tell us of the person from whose connection we should derive the greatest improvement, of the worth of one woman and the demerits of another, we are obliged to consider what is law, and not what is justice.

Add to this that marriage is an affair of property, and the worst of all properties. So long as two human beings are forbidden by positive institution to follow the dictates of their own mind, prejudice is alive and vigorous. So long as I seek to engross one woman to myself, and to prohibit my neighbor from proving his superior desert and reaping the fruits of it, I am guilty of the most odious of all monopolies. Over this imaginary prize men watch with perpetual jealousy, and one man will find his desires and his capacity to circumvent as much excited as the other is excited to traverse his projects and frustrate his hopes. As long as this state of society continues, philanthropy will be crossed and checked in a thousand ways, and the still augmenting stream of abuse will continue to flow.

The abolition of marriage will be attended with no evils. We are apt to represent it to ourselves as the harbinger of brutal lust and depravity. But it really happens, in this as in other cases, that the positive laws which are made to restrain our vices, irritate and multiply them. Not to say that the same sentiments of justice and happiness which, in a state of equal property, would destroy the relish for luxury, would decrease our inordinate appetites of every kind, and lead us universally to prefer the pleasures of intellect to the pleasures of sense. . . .

It cannot be definitively affirmed whether it be known in such a state of society who is the father of each individual child. But it may be affirmed that such knowledge will be of no importance. It is aristocracy, self-love, and family pride that teach us to set

a value upon it at present. I ought to prefer no human being to another because that being is my father, my wife, or my son, but because, for reasons which equally appeal to all understandings, that being is entitled to preference. One among the measures which will successively be dictated by the spirit of democracy, and that probably at no great distance, is the abolition of surnames. . . .

ANN RADCLIFFE  
THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO

1794

[This romance, the best known of its author's works, is sometimes regarded as the first of the "tales of terror" (but see Walpole's *Otranto*, above). The following extract exemplifies Mrs. Radcliffe's "peculiar art of exciting terror and impatient curiosity by the invention of incidents apparently supernatural, but eventually receiving a natural explanation," and at the same time her use of natural scenery as the setting for the action of her romances, on account of which she has been considered "a precursor of that general movement towards the delineation and comprehension of external nature which was to characterize the nineteenth century." (Both quotations are from Dr. Richard Garnett's article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.) The passages here reprinted are from chapters XVIII and XIX.]

. . . At length the travelers began to ascend among the Apennines. The immense pine forests, which at that period overhung these mountains, and between which the road wound, excluded all view but of the cliffs aspiring above, except that now and then an opening through the dark woods allowed the eye a momentary glimpse of the country below. The gloom of these shades, their solitary silence, except when the breeze swept over their summits, the tremendous precipices of the mountains that came partially to the eye, each assisted to raise the solemnity of Emily's feelings into awe. She saw only images of gloomy grandeur or of dreadful sublimity around her; other images, equally gloomy and equally terrible, gleamed on her imagination. She was going, she scarcely knew whither, under the dominion of a person from whose arbitrary disposition she had already suffered so much, to marry, perhaps, a man who possessed neither her affection nor esteem, or to endure, beyond the hope of succor, whatever punishment revenge — and that Italian revenge — might dictate. The more she considered what might be the motive of the journey, the more she became convinced that it was for the purpose of concluding her nuptials with Count Morano, with the secrecy which her resolute resistance had made neces-



sary to the honor, if not the safety, of Montoni. From the deep solitudes into which she was emerging, and from the gloomy castle of which she had heard some mysterious hints, her sick heart recoiled in despair, and she experienced that, though her mind was already occupied by peculiar distress, it was still alive to the influence of a new and local circumstance; why else did she shudder at the image of this desolate castle?

As the travelers still ascended among the pine forests, steep rose over steep, the mountains seemed to multiply as they went, and what was the summit of one eminence proved to be only the base of another. At length they reached a little plain, where the drivers stopped to rest the mules, whence a scene of such extent and magnificence opened below as drew even from Madame Montoni a note of admiration. Emily lost, for a moment, her sorrows in the immensity of nature. Beyond the amphitheatre of mountains that stretched below, whose tops appeared as numerous almost as the waves of the sea, and whose feet were concealed by the forests, extended the *campagna* of Italy, where cities, and rivers, and woods, and all the glow of cultivation, were mingled in gay confusion. The Adriatic bounded the horizon, into which the Po and the Brenta, after winding through the whole extent of the landscape, poured their fruitful waves. Emily gazed long on the splendors of the world she was quitting, of which the whole magnificence seemed thus given to her sight only to increase her regret on leaving it. . . .

From this sublime scene the travelers continued to ascend among the pines, till they entered a narrow pass of the mountains, which shut out every feature of the distant country, and in its stead exhibited only tremendous crags, impending over the road, where no vestige of humanity, or even of vegetation, appeared, except here and there the trunk and scathed branches of an oak, that hung nearly headlong from the rock into which its strong roots had fastened. This pass, which led into the heart of the Apennines, at length opened to day, and a scene of mountains stretched in long perspective, as wild as any the travelers had yet passed. Still vast pine forests hung upon their base, and crowned the ridgy precipice that rose perpendicularly from the vale, while above the rolling mists caught the sunbeams, and touched their cliffs with all the magical coloring of light and shade. The scene seemed perpetually changing, and

its features to assume new forms, as the winding road brought them to the eye in different attitudes; while the shifting vapors, now partially concealing their minuter beauties, and now illuminating them with splendid tints, assisted the illusions of the sight.

Though the deep valleys between these mountains were, for the most part, clothed with pines, sometimes an abrupt opening presented a perspective of only barren rocks, with a cataract flashing from their summit among broken cliffs, till its waters, reaching the bottom, foamed along with louder fury; and sometimes pastoral scenes exhibited their "green delights" in the narrow vales, smiling amidst surrounding horror. There herds and flocks of goats and sheep, browsing under the shade of hanging woods, and the shepherd's little cabin, reared on the margin of a clear stream, presented a sweet picture of repose.

Wild and romantic as were these scenes, their character had far less of the sublime than had those of the Alps, which guard the entrance of Italy. Emily was often elevated, but seldom felt those emotions of indescribable awe which she had so continually experienced in her passage over the Alps.

Towards the close of the day, the road wound into a deep valley. Mountains, whose shaggy steeps appeared to be inaccessible, almost surrounded it. To the east, a vista opened, and exhibited the Apennines in their darkest horrors; and the long perspective of retiring summits rising over each other, their ridges clothed with pines, exhibited a stronger image of grandeur than any that Emily had yet seen. The sun had just sunk below the top of the mountains she was descending, whose long shadow stretched athwart the valley, but his sloping rays, shooting through an opening in the cliffs, touched with a yellow gleam the summits of the forest that hung upon the opposite steeps, and streamed in full splendor upon the towers and battlements of a castle that spread its extensive ramparts along the brow of a precipice above. The splendor of these illuminated objects was heightened by the contrasted shade which involved the valley below.

"There," said Montoni, speaking for the first time in several hours, "is Udolpho."

Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle, which she understood to be Montoni's; for, though it was now lighted up

by the setting sun, the Gothic greatness of its features, and its moldering walls of dark gray stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object. As she gazed, the light died away on its walls, leaving a melancholy purple tint, which spread deeper and deeper as the thin vapor crept up the mountain, while the battlements were still tipped with splendor. From those too the rays soon faded, and the whole edifice was invested with the solemn duskiness of evening. Silent, lonely, and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all who dared to invade its solitary reign. As the twilight deepened, its features became more awful in obscurity; and Emily continued to gaze, till its clustering towers were alone seen rising over the tops of the woods, beneath whose thick shade the carriages soon after began to ascend.

The extent and darkness of these tall woods awakened terrific images in Emily's mind, and she almost expected to see banditti start up from under the trees. At length the carriages emerged upon a heathy rock, and soon after reached the castle gates, where the deep tones of the portal bell, which was struck upon to give notice of their arrival, increased the fearful emotions that had assailed Emily. While they waited till the servant within should come to open the gates, she anxiously surveyed the edifice; but the gloom that overspread it allowed her to distinguish little more than a part of its outline, with the massy wall of the ramparts, and to know that it was vast, ancient, and dreary. From the parts she saw, she judged of the heavy strength and extent of the whole. The gateway before her, leading into the courts, was of gigantic size, and was defended by two round towers, embattled, where, instead of banners, now waved long grass and wild plants that had taken root among the moldering stones, and which seemed to sigh, as the breeze rolled past, over the desolation around them. The towers were united by a curtain, pierced and embattled also, below which appeared the pointed arch of a huge portcullis, surmounting the gates. From these the walls of the ramparts extended to other towers, overlooking the precipice, whose shattered outline, appearing on a gleam that lingered in the west, told of the ravages of war. Beyond these all was lost in the obscurity of evening.

While Emily gazed with awe upon the scene, footsteps were heard within the gates, and the undrawing of bolts, after which



an ancient servant of the castle appeared, forcing back the huge folds of the portal to admit his lord. As the carriage-wheels rolled heavily under the portcullis, Emily's heart sunk, and she seemed as if she was going into her prison. The gloomy court into which she passed served to confirm the idea, and her imagination, ever awake to circumstance, suggested even more terrors than her reason could justify. . . .

"Do you know which is my room?" said she to Annette, as they crossed the hall.

"Yes, I believe I do, ma'amselle; but this is such a strange, rambling place! I have been lost in it already. They call it the double chamber, over the south rampart, and I went up this great staircase. My lady's room is at the other end of the castle."

Emily ascended the marble staircase, and came to the corridor, as they passed through which, Annette resumed her chat. "What a wild, lonely place this is, ma'am! I shall be quite frightened to live in it. How often and how often have I wished myself in France again! I little thought, when I came with my lady to see the world, that I should ever be shut up in such a place as this, or I would never have left my own country. — This way, ma'amselle, down this turning. I can almost believe in giants again, and such like, for this is just like one of their castles; and some night or other I suppose I shall see fairies, too, hopping about in that great old hall, that looks more like a church, with its huge pillars, than anything else."

"Yes," said Emily, smiling, and glad to escape from more serious thought. "If we come to the corridor about midnight, and look down into the hall, we shall certainly see it illuminated with a thousand lamps, and the fairies tripping in gay circles to the sound of delicious music; for it is in such places as this, you know, that they come to hold their revels. But I am afraid, Annette, you will not be able to pay the necessary penance for such a sight; and if they once hear your voice, the whole scene will vanish in an instant."

"Oh! if you will bear me company, ma'amselle, I will come to the corridor this very night, and I promise you I will hold my tongue; it shall not be my fault if the show vanishes. But, do you think they will come?"

"I cannot promise that with certainty, but I will venture to say it will not be your fault if the enchantment should vanish."

"Well, ma'amselle, that is saying more than I expected of you; but I am not so much afraid of fairies as of ghosts, and they say there are plentiful many of them about the castle. Now I should be frightened to death if I should chance to see any of them. But hush! ma'amselle, — walk softly! I have thought, several times, something passed by me!"

"Ridiculous!" said Emily. "You must not indulge such fancies."

"Oh, ma'am, they are not fancies, for aught I know. Benedetto says these dismal galleries and halls are fit for nothing but ghosts to live in; and I verily believe if I live long in them, I shall turn to one myself!"

"I hope," said Emily, "you will not suffer Signor Montoni to hear of these weak fears; they would highly displease him."

"What! you know, then, ma'amselle, all about it!" rejoined Annette. "No, no, I do know better than to do so; though if the signor can sleep sound, nobody else in the castle has any right to lay awake, I am sure."

Emily did not appear to notice this remark.

"Down this passage, ma'amselle; this leads to a back staircase. Oh, if I see anything I shall be frightened out of my wits!"

"That will scarcely be possible," said Emily, smiling, as she followed the winding of the passage, which opened into another gallery.

And then Annette, perceiving that she had missed her way while she had been so eloquently haranguing on ghosts and fairies, wandered about through other passages and galleries, till at length, frightened by their intricacies and desolation, she called aloud for assistance. But they were beyond the hearing of the servants, who were on the other side of the castle; and Emily now opened the door of a chamber on the left.

"Oh, do not go in there, ma'amselle," said Annette. "You will only lose yourself farther."

"Bring the light forward," said Emily; "we may possibly find our way through these rooms."

Annette stood at the door, in an attitude of hesitation, with the light held up to show the chamber; but the feeble ray spread through not half of it.

"Why do you hesitate?" said Emily. "Let me see whither this room leads."

Annette advanced reluctantly. It opened into a suite of spacious and ancient apartments, some of which were hung with tapestry, and others wainscoted with cedar and black larch-wood. What furniture there was seemed to be almost as old as the rooms, and retained an appearance of grandeur though covered with dust, and dropping to pieces with the damps and with age.

"How cold these rooms are, *ma'amselle!*" said Annette. "Nobody has lived in them for many, many years, they say. Do let us go."

"They may open upon the great staircase, perhaps," said Emily, passing on till she came to a chamber hung with pictures, and took the light to examine that of a soldier on horseback in a field of battle. He was darting his spear upon a man who lay under the feet of the horse, and who held up one hand in a supplicating attitude. The soldier, whose beaver was up, regarded him with a look of vengeance, and the countenance, with that expression, struck Emily as resembling Montoni. She shuddered, and turned from it, passing the light hastily over several other pictures, till she came to one concealed by a veil of black silk. The singularity of the circumstance struck her, and she stopped before it, wishing to remove the veil, and examine what could thus carefully be concealed, but somewhat wanting courage.

"Holy Virgin! what can this mean?" exclaimed Annette. "This is surely the picture they told me of at Venice."

"What picture?" said Emily.

"Why, a picture — a picture," replied Annette, hesitatingly; "but I never could make out exactly what it was about, either."

"Remove the veil, Annette."

"What! I, *ma'amselle*? I? Not for the world!"

Emily, turning round, saw Annette's countenance grow pale. "And pray what have you heard of this picture to so terrify you, my good girl?" said she.



"Nothing, ma'amselle; I have heard nothing; only let us find our way out."

"Certainly; but I wish first to examine the picture. Take the light, Annette, while I lift the veil."

Annette took the light, and immediately walked away with it, disregarding Emily's call to stay, who, not choosing to be left alone in the dark chamber, at length followed her. . . .

"Hush!" said Emily, trembling.

They listened, and, continuing to sit quite still, Emily heard a slow knocking against the wall. It came repeatedly. Annette then screamed loudly, and the chamber door slowly opened. It was Caterina, come to tell Annette that her lady wanted her. Emily, though she now perceived who it was, could not immediately overcome her terror; while Annette, half laughing, half crying, scolded Caterina for thus alarming them, and was also terrified lest what she had told had been overheard. Emily, whose mind was deeply impressed by the chief circumstance of Annette's relation, was unwilling to be left alone, in the present state of her spirits; but, to avoid offending Madame Montoni, and betraying her own weakness, she struggled to overcome the illusions of fear, and dismissed Annette for the night. . . .

# MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS

## THE MONK

1795

[This romance, the most famous of the "tales of terror," was written partly under the influence of Mrs. Radcliffe's *Udolpho* (see above), though the story was taken from that of Santon Barsisa in *The Guardian* (No. 148). It was published when the author was twenty years old. A prosecution was begun, on the ground that certain passages were immoral, and in a second edition the author expunged them. The extract here reprinted is the conclusion of the tale, and exemplifies in particular both Lewis's fondness for the supernatural and his use of the details of physical horror.]

AMBROSIO, rather dead than alive, was left alone in his dungeon. . . . He looked forward to the morrow with despair, and his terrors increased with the approach of midnight. Sometimes he was buried in gloomy silence; at others he raved with delirious passion, wrung his hands, and cursed the hour when he first beheld the light. In one of these moments his eye rested upon Matilda's mysterious gift. His transports of rage were instantly suspended. He looked earnestly at the book; he took it up, but immediately threw it from him with horror. He walked rapidly up and down his dungeon — then stopped, and again fixed his eyes on the spot where the book had fallen. He reflected that here at least was a resource from the fate which he dreaded. He stooped, and took it up a second time. He remained for some time trembling and irresolute; he longed to try the charm, yet feared its consequences. The recollection of his sentence at length fixed his indecision. He opened the volume; but his agitation was so great that he at first sought in vain for the page mentioned by Matilda. Ashamed of himself, he called all his courage to his aid. He turned to the seventh leaf; he began to read it aloud; but his eyes frequently wandered from the book, while he anxiously cast them round in search of the spirit whom he wished yet dreaded to behold. Still he persisted in his design; and with a voice unassured, and frequent interrup-

tions, he contrived to finish the four first lines of the page. They were in a language whose import was totally unknown to him.

Scarce had he pronounced the last word, when the effects of the charm were evident. A loud burst of thunder was heard, the prison shook to its very foundations, a blaze of lightning flashed through the cell, and in the next moment, borne upon sulphurous whirlwinds, Lucifer stood before him a second time. But he came not as when, at Matilda's summons, he borrowed the seraph's form to deceive Ambrosio. He appeared in all that ugliness which since his fall from heaven had been his portion. His blasted limbs still bore marks of the Almighty's thunder. A swarthy darkness spread itself over his gigantic form; his hands and feet were armed with long talons. Fury glared in his eyes, which might have struck the bravest heart with terror. Over his huge shoulders waved two enormous sable wings, and his hair was supplied by living snakes, which twined themselves round his brows with frightful hissings. In one hand he held a roll of parchment, and in the other an iron pen. Still the lightning flashed around him, and the thunder with repeated bursts seemed to announce the dissolution of Nature.

Terrified at an apparition so different from what he had expected, Ambrosio remained gazing upon the fiend, deprived of the power of utterance. The thunder had ceased to roll; universal silence reigned through the dungeon.

"For what am I summoned hither?" said the demon, in a voice which sulphurous fogs had damped to hoarseness.

At the sound Nature seemed to tremble. A violent earthquake rocked the ground, accompanied by a fresh burst of thunder, louder and more appalling than the first.

Ambrosio was long unable to answer the demon's demand. "I am condemned to die," he said with a faint voice, his blood running cold while he gazed upon his dreadful visitor. "Save me! bear me from hence!"

"Shall the reward of my services be paid me? Dare you embrace my cause? Will you be mine, body and soul? Are you prepared to renounce Him who made you, and Him who died for you? Answer but Yes, and Lucifer is your slave."

"Will no less price content you? Can nothing satisfy you but my eternal ruin? Spirit, you ask too much. Yet convey me from



this dungeon! Be my servant for one hour, and I will be yours for a thousand years. Will not this offer suffice?"

"It will not. I must have your soul; must have it mine, and mine forever."

"Insatiate demon! I will not doom myself to endless torments. I will not give up my hopes of being one day pardoned."

"You will not? On what chimera rest, then, your hopes? Short-sighted mortal! Miserable wretch! Are you not guilty? Are you not infamous in the eyes of men and angels? Can such enormous sins be forgiven? Hope you to escape my power? Your fate is already pronounced. The Eternal has abandoned you. Mine you are marked in the book of destiny, and mine you must and shall be."

"Fiend, 't is false! Infinite is the Almighty's mercy, and the penitent shall meet His forgiveness. My crimes are monstrous, but I will not despair of pardon. Haply, when they have received due chastisement — "

"Chastisement? Was purgatory meant for guilt like yours? Hope you that your offenses shall be bought off by prayers of superstitious dotards and droning monks? Ambrosio! be wise. Mine you must be. You are doomed to flames, but may shun them for the present. Sign this parchment; I will bear you from hence, and you may pass your remaining years in bliss and liberty. Enjoy your existence. Indulge in every pleasure to which appetite may lead you. But from the moment that it quits your body, remember that your soul belongs to me, and that I will not be defrauded of my right."

The monk was silent, but his looks declared that the tempter's words were not thrown away. He reflected on the conditions proposed with horror. On the other hand, he believed himself doomed to perdition, and that, by refusing the demon's succor, he only hastened tortures which he could never escape. The fiend saw that his resolution was shaken. He renewed his instances, and endeavored to fix the abbot's indecision. He described the agonies of death in the most terrific colors, and he worked so powerfully upon Ambrosio's despair and fears that he prevailed upon him to receive the parchment. He then struck the iron pen which he held into a vein of the monk's left hand. It pierced deep, and was instantly filled with blood; yet Ambrosio felt no pain from the wound. The pen was put into his hand;

it trembled. The wretch placed the parchment on the table before him, and prepared to sign it. Suddenly he held his hand; he started away hastily, and threw the pen upon the table.

"What am I doing?" he cried. Then, turning to the fiend with a desperate air, "Leave me! Begone! I will not sign the parchment."

"Fool!" exclaimed the disappointed demon, darting looks so furious as penetrated the friar's soul with horror. "Thus am I trifled with? Go, then! Rave in agony, expire in tortures, and then learn the extent of the Eternal's mercy! But beware how you make me again your mock! Call me no more, till resolved to accept my offers. Summon me a second time to dismiss me thus idly, and these talons shall rend you into a thousand pieces. Speak yet again: will you sign the parchment?"

"I will not. Leave me! Away!"

Instantly the thunder was heard to roll horribly; once more the earth trembled with violence; the dungeon resounded with loud shrieks, and the demon fled with blasphemy and curses.

At first the monk rejoiced at having resisted the seducer's arts, and obtained a triumph over mankind's enemy; but as the hour of punishment drew near, his former terrors revived in his heart. Their momentary repose seemed to have given them fresh vigor. The nearer that the time approached, the more did he dread appearing before the throne of God. He shuddered to think how soon he must be plunged into eternity — how soon meet the eyes of his Creator, whom he had so grievously offended. The bell announced midnight. As he listened for the first stroke, the blood ceased to circulate in the abbot's veins. He heard death and torture murmured in each succeeding sound. He expected to see the archers entering his prison; and, as the bell forbore to toll, he seized the magic volume in a fit of despair. He opened it, turned hastily to the seventh page, and, as if fearing to allow himself a moment's thought, ran over the fatal lines with rapidity.

Accompanied by his former terrors, Lucifer again stood before the trembler.

"You have summoned me," said the fiend. "Are you determined to be wise? Will you accept my conditions? You know them already. Renounce your claim to salvation, make over to me your soul, and I bear you from this dungeon instantly. Yet

is it time. Resolve, or it will be too late. Will you sign the parchment?"

"I must — Fate urges me — I accept your conditions."

"Sign the parchment," replied the demon, in an exulting tone.

The contract and the bloody pen still lay upon the table. Ambrosio drew near it. He prepared to sign his name. A moment's reflection made him hesitate.

"Hark!" cried the tempter. "They come. Be quick! Sign the parchment, and I bear you from hence this moment."

In effect, the archers were heard approaching, appointed to lead Ambrosio to the stake. The sound encouraged the monk in his resolution.

"What is the import of this writing?" said he.

"It makes your soul over to me forever, and without reserve."

"What am I to receive in exchange?"

"My protection, and release from this dungeon. Sign it, and this instant I bear you away."

Ambrosio took up the pen. He set it to the parchment. Again his courage failed him. He felt a pang of terror at his heart, and once more threw the pen upon the table.

"Weak and puerile!" cried the exasperated fiend. "Away with this folly! Sign the writing this instant, or I sacrifice you to my rage."

At this moment the bolt of the outward door was drawn back. The prisoner heard the rattling of chains; the heavy bar fell; the archers were on the point of entering. Worked up to frenzy by the urgent danger, shrinking from the approach of death, terrified by the demon's threats, and seeing no other means to escape destruction, the wretched monk complied. He signed the fatal contract, and gave it hastily into the evil spirit's hands, whose eyes, as he received the gift, glared with malicious rapture.

"Take it!" said the God-abandoned. "Now then save me! Snatch me from hence!"

"Hold! Do you freely and absolutely renounce your Creator and His Son?"

"I do! I do!"

"Do you make over your soul to me forever?"

"Forever!"

"Without reserve or subterfuge? without future appeal to the divine mercy?"



The last chain fell from the door of the prison. The key was heard turning in the lock. Already the iron door grated heavily upon its rusty hinges —

“I am yours forever, and irrevocably!” cried the monk, wild with terror. “I abandon all claim to salvation. I own no power but yours. Hark! hark! they come! Oh, save me! bear me away!”

“I have triumphed! You are mine past reprieve, and I fulfill my promise.”

While he spoke, the door unclosed. Instantly the demon grasped one of Ambrosio’s arms, spread his broad pinions, and sprang with him into the air. The roof opened as they soared upwards, and closed again when they had quitted the dungeon. . . .

Though rescued from the Inquisition, Ambrosio as yet was insensible of the blessings of liberty. The damning contract weighed heavy upon his mind; and the scenes in which he had been a principal actor had left behind them such impressions as rendered his heart the seat of anarchy and confusion. The objects now before his eyes, and which the full moon sailing through clouds permitted him to examine, were ill calculated to inspire that calm of which he stood so much in need. The disorder of his imagination was increased by the wildness of the surrounding scenery; by the gloomy caverns and steep rocks, rising above each other, and dividing the passing clouds; solitary clusters of trees scattered here and there, among whose thick-twined branches the wind of night sighed hoarsely and mournfully; the shrill cry of mountain eagles, who had built their nests among these lonely deserts; the stunning roar of torrents, as swelled by late rains they rushed violently down tremendous precipices; and the dark waters of a silent sluggish stream, which faintly reflected the moonbeams, and bathed the rock’s base on which Ambrosio stood. The abbot cast round him a look of terror. His infernal conductor was still by his side, and eyed him with a look of mingled malice, exultation, and contempt. . . . Ambrosio could not sustain his glance. He turned away his eyes, while thus spoke the demon:

“I have him then in my power! This model of piety! This being without reproach! This mortal who placed his puny virtues on a level with those of angels. He is mine! irrevocably, eter-

nally mine! Companions of my sufferings! denizens of hell! how grateful will be my present! . . . I burn to possess my right, and alive you quit not these mountains.”

During the demon's speech Ambrosio had been stupefied by terror and surprise. This last declaration aroused him.

“Not quit these mountains alive!” he exclaimed. “Perfidious, what mean you? Have you forgotten our contract?”

The fiend answered by a malicious laugh.

“Our contract? Have I not performed my part? What more did I promise than to save you from your prison? Have I not done so? Are you not safe from the Inquisition — safe from all but me? Fool that you were to confide yourself to a devil! Why did you not stipulate for life, and power, and pleasure? Then all would have been granted; now your reflections come too late. Miscreant, prepare for death; you have not many hours to live!”

On hearing this sentence, dreadful were the feelings of the devoted wretch! He sank upon his knees, and raised his hands toward heaven. The fiend read his intention, and prevented it.

“What!” he cried, darting at him a look of fury. “Dare you still implore the Eternal's mercy? Would you feign penitence, and again act an hypocrite's part? Villain, resign your hopes of pardon. Thus I secure my prey!”

As he said this, darting his talons into the monk's shaven crown, he sprang with him from the rock. The caves and mountains rang with Ambrosio's shrieks. The demon continued to soar aloft, till, reaching a dreadful height, he released the sufferer. Headlong fell the monk through the airy waste. The sharp point of a rock received him, and he rolled from precipice to precipice, till, bruised and mangled, he rested on the river's banks. Instantly a violent storm arose; the winds in fury rent up rocks and forests; the sky was now black with clouds, now sheeted with fire; the rain fell in torrents; it swelled the stream; the waves overflowed their banks. They reached the spot where Ambrosio lay, and, when they abated, carried with them into the river the corse of the despairing monk.

## THE ANTI-JACOBIN

1798

[This periodical, a protest against "the spirit of 1789," appeared weekly from September, 1797, to July, 1798. The chief contributors were George Canning, then under-secretary of state, and Hookham Frere; to Canning most of the successful satirical articles are attributed. (This weekly *Anti-Jacobin* must not be confused with a monthly which adopted its name after it had ceased to appear, and ran till 1821.) *The Rovers*, the drama described in the following extracts (of which Acts I, II, and IV were printed in full) is at once a burlesque of the radical philosophy of the school of Godwin, and of the sentimentalism and doubtful ethics of the new German romantic drama, which at this period was influential in England. In particular, Goethe's *Stella*, Schiller's *The Robbers*, and Kotzebue's *The Stranger* are ridiculed by imitations of detail. The extracts are from Numbers xxx and xxxi.]

OUR ingenious correspondent, Mr. Higgins, has not been idle. The deserved popularity of the extracts which we have been enabled to give from his two didactic poems, *The Progress of Man* and *The Loves of the Triangles*, has obtained for us the communication of several other works which he has in hand, all framed upon the same principle and directed to the same end. The propagation of the "new system of philosophy" forms, as he has himself candidly avowed to us, the main object of all his writings. A system comprehending not politics only, and religion, but morals and manners, and generally whatever goes to the composition or holding together of human society; in all of which a total change and revolution is absolutely necessary (as he contends) for the advancement of our common nature to its true dignity, and to the summit of that perfection which the combination of matter called Man is by its innate energies capable of attaining.

Of this system, while the sublimer and more scientific branches are to be taught by the splendid and striking medium of didactic poetry, or ratiocination in rhyme, illustrated with such paintings and portraitures of essences and their attributes as may lay hold of the imagination while they perplex the judgment, the more ordinary parts, such as relate to the conduct of common



life, and the regulation of the social feelings, are naturally the subject of a less elevated style of writing, — of a style which speaks to the eye as well as to the ear, — in short, of dramatic poetry and scenic representation.

“With this view,” says Mr. Higgins (for we love to quote the very words of this extraordinary and indefatigable writer), in a letter dated from his study in St. Mary Axe, the window of which looks upon the parish pump, — “with this view I have turned my thoughts more particularly to the German stage, and have composed, in imitation of the most popular pieces of that country, which have already met with so general reception and admiration in this, a play; which, if it has a proper run, will, I think, do much to unhinge the present notions of men with regard to the obligations of civil society, and to substitute, in lieu of a sober contentment and regular discharge of the duties incident to each man’s particular situation, a wild desire of undefinable latitude and extravagance; an aspiration after shapeless somethings, that can neither be described nor understood, — a contemptuous disgust at all that *is*, and a persuasion that nothing is as it ought to be; — to operate, in short, a general discharge of every man (in his own estimation) from everything that laws, divine or human, that local customs, immemorial habits, and multiplied examples, impose upon him; and to set them about doing what they like, where they like, when they like, and how they like, without reference to any law but their own will, or to any consideration of how others may be affected by their conduct.

“When this is done, my dear sir,” continues Mr. H. (for he writes very confidentially), “you see that a great step is gained towards the dissolution of the frame of every existing community. I say nothing of governments, as their fall is of course implicated in that of the social system, and you have long known that I hold every government (that acts by coercion and restriction — by laws made by the few to bind the many) as a *malum in se*, — an evil to be eradicated, a nuisance to be abated, by force, if force be practicable, — if not, by the artillery of reason, — by pamphlets, speeches, toasts at club dinners, and — though last, not least — didactic poems.

“But where would be the advantage of the destruction of this or that government, if the form of society itself were to be suf-

ferred to continue such as that another must necessarily arise out of it, and over it? Society, my dear sir, in its present state, is a hydra. Cut off one head, — another presently sprouts out, and your labor is to begin again. At best, you can only hope to find it a polypus, — where, by cutting off the head, you are sometimes fortunate enough to find a tail (which answers all the same purposes) spring up in its place. This, we know, has been the case in France, — the only country in which the great experiment of regeneration has been tried with anything like a fair chance of success.

“Destroy the frame of society, — decompose its parts, — and set the elements fighting one against another, insulated and individual, every man for himself (stripped of prejudice, of bigotry, and of feeling for others) against the remainder of his species, — and there is then some hope of a totally new order of things, — of a radical reform in the present corrupt system of the world.

“The German theatre appears to proceed on this judicious plan. And I have endeavored to contribute my mite towards extending its effect and its popularity. There is one obvious advantage attending this mode of teaching, — that it can proportion the infractions of law, religion, and morality, which it recommends, to the capacity of a reader or spectator. If you tell a student, or an apprentice, or a merchant’s clerk, of the virtue of a Brutus, of the splendor of a Lafayette, you may excite his desire to be equally conspicuous; but how is he to set about it? Where is he to find the tyrant to murder? How is he to provide the monarch to be imprisoned, and the national guards to be reviewed on a white horse? But paint the beauties of forgery to him in glowing colors, — show him that the presumption of virtue is in favor of rapine, and occasional murder on the highway, — and he presently understands you. The highway is at hand — the till or the counter is within reach. These haberdashers’ heroics ‘come home to the business and the bosoms of men.’ And you may readily make ten footpads, where you would not have materials nor opportunity for a single tyrannicide.

“The subject of the piece which I herewith transmit to you, is taken from common or middling life; and its merit is that of teaching the most lofty truths in the most humble style, and deducing them from the most ordinary occurrences. Its moral is

obvious and easy, and is one frequently inculcated by the German dramas which I have had the good fortune to see; being no other than 'the reciprocal duties of one or more husbands to one or more wives,' and 'to the children who may happen to arise out of this complicated and endearing connection.' The plot, indeed, is formed by the combination of the plots of two of the most popular of these plays (in the same way as Terence was wont to combine two stories of Menander's). The characters are such as the admirers of these plays will recognize for their familiar acquaintances. There are the usual ingredients of imprisonments, post-houses and horns, and appeals to angels and devils. I have omitted only the swearing, to which English ears are not yet sufficiently accustomed." . . .

### PLOT

Rogero, son of the late minister of the Count of Saxe-Weimar, having, while he was at college, fallen desperately in love with Matilda Pottingen, daughter of his tutor, Doctor Engelbertus Pottingen, Professor of Civil Law, and Matilda evidently returning his passion, the Doctor, to prevent ill consequences, sends his daughter on a visit to her aunt in Wetteravia, where she becomes acquainted with Casimere, a Polish officer, who happens to be quartered near her aunt's, and has several children by him.

Roderic, Count of Saxe-Weimar, a prince of a tyrannical and licentious disposition, has for his Prime Minister and favorite, Gaspar, a crafty villain, who has risen to his post by first ruining and then putting to death Rogero's father. Gaspar, apprehensive of the power and popularity which the young Rogero may enjoy at his return to court, seizes the occasion of his intrigue with Matilda (of which he is apprised officially by Doctor Pottingen) to procure from his master an order for the recall of Rogero from college, and for committing him to the care of the Prior of the Abbey of Quedlinburgh, a priest rapacious, savage, and sensual, and devoted to Gaspar's interests, — sending at the same time private orders to the Prior to confine him in a dungeon.

Here Rogero languishes many years. His daily sustenance is administered to him through a grated opening at the top of the cavern, by the landlady of the Golden Eagle at Weimar, with whom Gaspar contracts, in the Prince's name, for his supper, — intending, and more than once endeavoring, to corrupt the waiter to mingle poison with the food, in order that he may get rid of Rogero forever.

In the mean time Casimere, having been called away from the neighborhood of Matilda's residence to other quarters, becomes enamored of, and marries Cecilia, by whom he has a family, and whom he likewise deserts after a few years, on pretence of business which calls him to Kam-schatka.

Doctor Pottingen, now grown old and infirm, and feeling the want of



his daughter's society, sends young Pottingen in search of her, with strict injunctions not to return without her, and to bring with her either her present lover Casimere, or — should that not be possible — Rogero himself, if he can find him; the Doctor having set his heart upon seeing his children comfortably settled before his death. Matilda, about the same period, quits her aunt's in search of Casimere; and Cecilia, having been advertised — by an anonymous letter — of the falsehood of his Kamshatkan journey, sets out in the post-wagon on a similar pursuit.

It is at this point of time the play opens, with the accidental meeting of Cecilia and Matilda at the inn at Weimar. Casimere arrives there soon after, and falls in first with Matilda, and then with Cecilia. Successive *éclaircissements* take place, and an arrangement is finally made by which the two ladies are to live jointly with Casimere.

Young Pottingen, wearied with a few weeks' search, during which he has not been able to find either of the objects of it, resolves to stop at Weimar and wait events there. It so happens that he takes up his lodging in the same house with Puddincrantz and Beefinstern, two English noblemen, whom the tyranny of King John has obliged to fly from their country, and who, after wandering about the continent for some time, have fixed their residence at Weimar.

The news of the signature of Magna Charta arriving, determines Puddincrantz and Beefinstern to return to England. Young Pottingen opens his case to them, and entreats them to stay to assist him in the object of his search. This they refuse; but, coming to the inn where they are to set off for Hamburg, they meet Casimere, from whom they had both received many civilities in Poland.

Casimere, by this time, tired of his "Double Arrangement," and having learnt from the waiter that Rogero is confined in the vaults of the neighboring Abbey for love, he resolves to attempt his rescue, and to make over Matilda to him as the price of his deliverance. He communicates his scheme to Puddingfield and Beefington, who agree to assist him; as also does young Pottingen. The waiter of the inn, proving to be a Knight Templar in disguise, is appointed leader of the expedition. A band of troubadours, who happen to be returning from the Crusades, and a company of Austrian and Prussian grenadiers returning from the Seven Years' War, are engaged as troops.

The attack on the Abbey is made with great success. The Count of Weimar and Gaspar, who are feasting with the Prior, are seized and beheaded in the refectory. The Prior is thrown into the dungeon from which Rogero is rescued. Matilda and Cecilia rush in. The former recognizes Rogero, and agrees to live with him. The children are produced on all sides, and young Pottingen is commissioned to write to his father, the Doctor, to detail the joyful events which have taken place, and to invite him to Weimar to partake of the general felicity.



## APPENDIX

### THE POEMS OF OSSIAN

TRANSLATED BY

JAMES MACPHERSON

1760, 1762

[The Ossianic "poems" are represented in an Appendix, as not being strictly a part of either the prose or the poetry of the eighteenth century. They were published by Macpherson as translations: first, *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, collected in the Highlands*, in 1760; then *Fingal, an ancient epic poem in six books, together with several other poems composed by Ossian, the son of Fingal*, in 1762; lastly *Temora*, another epic, in 1763. Their genuineness was early suspected (see the extracts above from Gray's *Letters*, page 328, and Boswell's *Johnson*, page 643), and the exact character of the writings has never been determined with precision. It is now generally agreed, however, that while Macpherson found his materials in Gaelic literature the arrangement and style of his "translations" were largely his own. The following extracts include the close of *Carthou* (including the famous "Hymn to the Sun"), the opening of Book I of *Fingal*, and the greater portion of *The Death of Cuthullin*.]

#### CARTHON

. . . FINGAL was sad for Carthou; he commanded his bards to mark the day, when shadowy autumn returned; and often did they mark the day and sing the hero's praise. "Who comes so dark from ocean's roar, like autumn's shadowy cloud? Death is trembling in his hand! his eyes are flames of fire! Who roars along dark Lora's heath? Who but Carthou, king of swords! The people fall! See how he strides, like the sullen ghost of Morven! But there he lies, a goodly oak which sudden blasts overturned! When shalt thou rise, Balclutha's joy? When, Carthou, shalt thou arise? Who comes so dark from ocean's roar, like autumn's shadowy cloud?"

Such were the words of the bards, in the day of their mourning. Ossian often joined their voice, and added to their song. "My soul has been mournful for Carthou; he fell in the days of his youth. And thou, O Clessammor! where is thy dwelling in the wind? Has the youth forgot his wound? Flies he on clouds with thee? I feel the sun, O Malvina! Leave me to my rest. Perhaps they may come to my dreams; I think I hear a feeble voice. The beam of heaven delights to shine on the grave of Carthou; I feel it warm around! O thou that



rollest above, round as the shield of my fathers! Whence are thy beams, O sun! thy everlasting light? Thou comest forth in thy awful beauty; the stars hide themselves in the sky; the moon, cold and pale, sinks in the western wave. But thou thyself movest alone; who can be a companion of thy course? The oaks of the mountains fall; the mountains themselves decay with years; the ocean shrinks, and grows again; the moon herself is lost in heaven. But thou art forever the same, rejoicing in the brightness of thy course. When the world is dark with tempests, when thunder rolls and lightning flies, thou lookest in thy beauty from the clouds, and laughest at the storm. But to Ossian thou lookest in vain; for he beholds thy beams no more, whether thy yellow hair flows on the eastern clouds, or thou tremblest at the gates of the West. But thou art, perhaps, like me, for a season; thy years will have an end. Thou shalt sleep in the clouds, careless of the voice of the morning. Exult, then, O sun, in the strength of thy youth! Age is dark and unlovely; it is like the glimmering light of the moon, when it shines through broken clouds, and the mist is on the hills; the blast of the North is on the plain; the traveler shrinks in the midst of his journey."

#### FINGAL

Cuthullin sat by Tura's wall, by the tree of the rustling sound. His spear leaned against a rock. His shield lay on grass by his side. Amid his thoughts of mighty Carbar, a hero slain by the chief in war, the scout of ocean comes, Moran the son of Fithil.

"Arise!" says the youth. "Cuthullin, arise! I see the ships of the North! Many, chief of men, are the foe. Many are the heroes of the sea-born Swaran!"

"Moran," replied the blue-eyed chief, "thou ever tremblest, son of Fithil! Thy fears have increased the foe. It is Fingal, king of deserts, with aid to green Erin of streams."

"I beheld their chief," says Moran, "tall as a glittering rock. His spear is a blasted pine; his shield the rising moon. He sat on the shore! like a cloud of mist on the silent hill! Many, chief of heroes! I said, many are our hands of war. Well art thou named the Mighty Man, but many mighty men are seen from Tura's windy walls.

"He spoke, like a wave on a rock: Who in this land appears like me? Heroes stand not in my presence; they fall to earth from my hand. Who can meet Swaran in fight? Who but Fingal, king of Selma of storms? Once we wrestled on Malmor; our heels overturned the woods. Rocks fell from their place; rivulets, changing their course, fled murmuring from our side. Three days we renewed the strife; heroes stood at a distance, and trembled. On the fourth, Fingal says that the king of the ocean fell; but Swaran says he stood. Let dark Cuthullin yield to him that is strong as the storms of this land!"

"No!" replied the blue-eyed chief, "I never yield to mortal man! Dark Cuthullin shall be great or dead! Go, son of Fithil, take my spear. Strike the sounding shield of Semo. It hangs at Tura's rustling gate. The sound of peace is not in its voice! My heroes shall hear and obey."

He went. He struck the bossy shield. The hills, the rocks reply. The sound spreads along the wood; deer start by the lake of roes. Curach leaps from the sounding rock, and Connal of the bloody spear. Crugal's breast of snow beats high. The son of Favi leaves the dark-brown hind. "It is the shield of war," said Ronnor! "The spear of Cuthullin," said Lugar! Son of the sea, put on thy arms! Calmar, lift thy sounding steel! Puno! dreadful hero, arise! Cairbar, from thy red tree of Cromla! Bend thy knee, O Eth! descend from the streams of Lena. Ca-olt, stretch thy side as thou movest along the whistling heath of Mora; thy side that is white as the foam of the troubled sea, when the dark winds pour it on rocky Cuthon.

Now I behold the chiefs in the pride of their former deeds! Their souls are kindled at the battles of old, at the actions of other times. Their eyes are flames of fire. They roll in search of the foes of the land. Their mighty hands are on their swords. Lightning pours from their sides of steel. They come like streams from the mountains; each rushes roaring from his hill. Bright are the chiefs of battle, in the armor of their fathers. Gloomy and dark their heroes follow, like the gathering of the rainy clouds behind the red meteors of heaven. The sounds of crashing arms ascend. The gray dogs howl between. Unequal bursts the song of battle. Rocky Cromla echoes round. On Lena's dusky heath they stand, like mist that shades the hills of autumn; when broken and dark it settles high, and lifts its head to heaven.

"Hail!" said Cuthullin, "sons of the narrow vales! Hail, hunters of the deer! Another sport is drawing near; it is like the dark rolling of that wave on the coast. Or shall we fight, ye sons of war, or yield green Erin to Lochlin? O Connal, speak, thou first of men! thou breaker of the shields! Thou hast often fought with Lochlin; wilt thou lift thy father's spear?"

"Cuthullin," calm the chief replied, "the spear of Connal is keen. It delights to shine in battle, to mix with the blood of thousands. But though my hand is bent on fight, my heart is for the peace of Erin. Behold, thou first in Cormac's war, the sable fleet of Swaran. His masts are many on our coast, like reeds in the Lake of Lego. His ships are forests clothed with mist, when the trees yield by turns to the squally wind. Many are his chiefs in battle. Connal is for peace! Fingal would shun his arm, the first of mortal men! Fingal, who scatters the mighty, as stormy winds the heath, when streams roar through echoing Cona, and night settles with all her clouds on the hill."

"Fly, thou man of peace!" said Calmar. "Fly!" said the son of Matha. "Go, Connal, to thy silent hills, where the spear never

brightens in war! Pursue the dark-brown deer of Cromla: stop with thine arrows the bounding roes of Lena. But, blue-eyed son of Semo, Cuthullin, ruler of the field, scatter thou the sons of Lochlin! roar through the ranks of their pride. Let no vessel of the kingdom of Snow bound on the dark-rolling waves of Inistore. Rise, ye dark winds of Erin, rise! Roar, whirlwind of Lara of hinds! Amid the tempest let me die, torn, in a cloud, by angry ghosts of men; amid the tempest let Calmar die, if ever chase was sport to him, so much as the battle of shields!"

"Calmar," Connal slow replied, "I never fled, young son of Matha! I was swift with my friends in fight; but small is the fame of Connal. The battle was won in my presence; the valiant overcame! But, son of Semo, hear my voice; regard the ancient throne of Cormac. Give wealth and half the land for peace, till Fingal shall arrive on our coast. Or, if war be thy choice, I lift the sword and spear. My joy shall be in the midst of thousands; my sword shall lighten through the gloom of the fight!"

"To me," Cuthullin replies, "pleasant is the noise of arms! pleasant as the thunder of heaven before the shower of spring! But gather all the shining tribes, that I may view the sons of war. Let them pass along the heath, bright as the sunshine before a storm, when the west wind collects the clouds, and Morven echoes over all her oaks! But where are my friends in battle? The supporters of my arm in danger? Where art thou, white-bosomed Cathba? Where is that cloud in war, Duchomar? Hast thou left me, O Fergus! in the day of the storm? Fergus, first in our joy at the feast! son of Rossa! arm of death! comest thou like a roe from Malmor? Like a hart from thy echoing hills? Hail, thou son of Rossa! what shades the soul of war?"

"Four stones," replied the chief, "rise on the grave of Cathba. These hands have laid in earth Duchomar, that cloud in war. Cathba, son of Torman! thou wert a sunbeam in Erin. And thou, O valiant Duchomar! a mist of the marshy Lano, when it moves on the plains of autumn, bearing the death of thousands along. Morna, fairest of maids! calm is thy sleep in the cave of the rock. Thou hast fallen in darkness, like a star that shoots across the desert, when the traveler is alone and mourns the transient beam."

"Say," said Seno's blue-eyed son, "say how fell the chiefs of Erin? Fell they by the sons of Lochlin, striving in the battle of heroes? Or what confines the strong in arms to the dark and narrow house?"

"Cathba," replied the hero, "fell by the sword of Duchomar at the oak of the noisy streams. Duchomar came to Tura's cave; he spoke to the lovely Morna. 'Morna, fairest among women, lovely daughter of strong-armed Cormac! Why in the circle of stones, in the cave of the rock alone? The stream murmurs along. The old tree groans in the wind. The lake is troubled before thee; dark are the clouds of the sky! But thou art snow on the heath; thy hair is the mist of Cromla, when it curls on the hill; when it shines to the beam of the West! Thy



breasts are two smooth rocks seen from Branno of streams; thy arms like two white pillars in the halls of the great Fingal.'

"'From whence,' the fair-haired maid replied, 'from whence, Duchomar, most gloomy of men? Dark are thy brows and terrible! Red are thy rolling eyes! Does Swaran appear on the sea? What of the foe, Duchomar?' 'From the hill I return, O Morna, from the hill of the dark-brown hinds. Three have I slain with my bended yew, three with my long-bounding dogs of the chase. Lovely daughter of Cormac, I love thee as my soul! I have slain one stately deer for thee. High was his branchy head, and fleet his feet of wind.' 'Duchomar!' calm the maid replied, 'I love thee not, thou gloomy man! Hard is thy heart of rock; dark is thy terrible brow. But Cathba, young son of Torman, thou art the love of Morna. Thou art a sunbeam in the day of the gloomy storm. Sawest thou the son of Torman, lovely on the hill of his hinds? Here the daughter of Cormac waits the coming of Cathba.'

"'Long shall Morna wait,' Duchomar said, 'long shall Morna wait for Cathba! Behold this sword unsheathed! Here wanders the blood of Cathba! Long shall Morna wait. He fell by the stream of Branno. On Cromla will I raise his tomb, daughter of blue-shielded Cormac! Turn on Duchomar thine eyes; his arm is strong as a storm.'

"'Is the son of Torman fallen?' said the wildly bursting voice of the maid. 'Is he fallen on his echoing hills, the youth with the breast of snow? the first in the chase of hinds? the foe of the strangers of ocean? Thou art dark to me, Duchomar! cruel is thine arm to Morna! Give me that sword, my foe! I love the wandering blood of Cathba!'

"He gave the sword to her tears. She pierced his manly breast! He fell, like the bank of a mountain stream, and, stretching forth his hand, he spoke: 'Daughter of blue-shielded Cormac, thou hast slain me in youth! The sword is cold in my breast; Morna, I feel it cold. Give me to Moina the maid. Duchomar was the dream of her night! She will raise my tomb; the hunter shall raise my fame. But draw the sword from my breast. Morna, the steel is cold!' She came, in all her tears she came; she drew the sword from his breast. He pierced her white side! He spread her fair locks on the ground! Her bursting blood sounds from her side; her white arm is stained with red. Rolling in death she lay. The cave re-echoed to her sighs."

"Peace," said Cuthullin, "to the souls of the heroes! Their deeds were great in fight. Let them show their features of war. My soul shall then be firm in danger, mine arm like the thunder of heaven. But be thou on a moonbeam, O Morna! near the window of my rest, when my thoughts are of peace, when the din of arms is past. Gather the strength of the tribes! Move to the wars of Erin! Attend the car of my battles! Rejoice in the noise of my course! Place three spears by my side; follow the bounding of my steeds! that my soul may be strong in my friends, when battle darkens round the beams of my steel!"

As rushes a stream of foam from the dark shady deep of Cromla,

when the thunder is traveling above, and dark-brown night sits on half the hill; — through the breaches of the tempest look forth the dim faces of ghosts; — so fierce, so vast, so terrible rushed on the sons of Erin. The chief, like a whale of ocean, whom all his billows pursue, poured valor forth as a stream, rolling his might along the shore. The sons of Lochlin heard the noise, as the sound of a winter storm. Swaran struck his bossy shield; he called the son of Arno. "What murmur rolls along the hill, like the gathered flies of the eve? The sons of Erin descend, or rustling winds roar in the distant wood! Such is the noise of Gormal, before the white tops of my waves arise." . . .

Like autumn's dark storms, pouring from two echoing hills, towards each other approached the heroes. Like two deep streams from high rocks meeting, mixing, roaring, on the plain, loud, rough and dark in battle meet Lochlin and Innisfail. Chief mixes his strokes with chief, and man with man; steel, clanging, sounds on steel. Helmets are cleft on high. Blood bursts and smokes around. Strings murmur on the polished yews. Darts rush along the sky. Spears fall like the circles of light which gild the face of night. As the noise of the troubled ocean, when roll the waves on high, as the last peal of thunder in heaven, such is the din of war! Though Cormac's hundred bards were there to give the fight to song, feeble was the voice of a hundred bards to send the deaths to future times. For many were the deaths of heroes; wide poured the blood of the brave! . . .

#### THE DEATH OF CUTHULLIN

. . . Cuthullin sits at Lego's lake, at the dark rolling of waters. Night is around the hero. His thousands spread on the heath. A hundred oaks burn in the midst. The feast of shells is smoking wide. Carril strikes the harp beneath a tree. His gray locks glitter in the beam. The rustling blast of night is near, and lifts his aged hair. His song is of the blue Togorma, and of its chief, Cuthullin's friend. "Why art thou absent, Connal, in the day of the gloomy storm? The chiefs of the South have convened against the car-borne Cormac. The winds detain thy sails. Thy blue waters roll around thee. But Cormac is not alone. The son of Semo fights his wars! Semo's son his battles fights! the terror of the stranger! he that is like the vapor of death, slowly borne by sultry winds. The sun reddens in his presence; the people fall around."

Such was the song of Carril, when a son of the foe appeared. He threw down his pointless spear. He spoke the words of Torlath, — Torlath, chief of heroes, at Lego's sable surge; he that led his thousands to battle against car-borne Cormac, Cormac who was distant far, in Temora's echoing halls; he learned to bend the bow of his fathers, and to lift the spear. Nor long didst thou lift the spear, mildly shining beam of youth! Death stands dim behind thee, like the darkened half of the moon behind its growing light! Cuthullin rose before the bard that came from generous Torlath. He offered him the shell of

joy. He honored the son of songs. "Sweet voice on Lego!" he said, "what are the words of Torlath? Comes he to our feast or battle, the car-borne son of Cantela?"

"He comes to thy battle," replied the bard, "to the sounding strife of spears. When morning is gray on Lego, Torlath will fight on the plain. Wilt thou meet him in thine arms, king of the isle of mist? Terrible is the spear of Torlath! It is a meteor of night. He lifts it, and the people fall! Death sits in the lightning of his sword!"

"Do I fear," replied Cuthullin, "the spear of car-borne Torlath? He is brave as a thousand heroes, but my soul delights in war. The sword rests not by the side of Cuthullin, bard of the times of old! Morning shall meet me on the plain, and gleam on the blue arms of Semo's son. But sit thou on the heath, O bard! and let us hear thy voice. Partake of the joyful shell, and hear the songs of Temora!"

"This is no time," replied the bard, "to hear the song of joy; when the mighty are to meet in battle, like the strength of the waves of Lego. Why art thou so dark, Slimora! with all thy silent woods? No star trembles on thy top; no moonbeam on thy side. But the meteors of death are there; the gray watery forms of ghosts. Why art thou dark, Slimora! with thy silent woods?"

He retired, in the sound of his song. Carril joined his voice. The music was like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul; the ghosts of departed bards heard on Slimora's side. Soft sounds spread along the wood. The silent valleys of night rejoice. So, when he sits in the silence of the day, in the valley of his breeze, the humming of the mountain bee comes to Ossian's ear; the gale drowns it in its course, but the pleasant sound returns again. Slant looks the sun on the field! gradual grows the shade of the hill!

"Raise," said Cuthullin to his hundred bards, "the song of the noble Fingal; that song which he hears at night, when the dreams of his rest descend, when the bards strike the distant harp, and the faint light gleams on Selma's walls. Or let the grief of Lara rise; the sighs of the mother of Calmar, when he was sought in vain on his hills, when she beheld his bow in the hall. Carril, place the shield of Caithbat on that branch. Let the spear of Cuthullin be near, that the sound of my battle may rise with the gray beam of the East." The hero leaned on his father's shield; the song of Lara rose! The hundred bards were distant far; Carril alone is near the chief. The words of the song were his; the sound of his harp was mournful.

"Alcletha with the aged locks! mother of car-borne Calmar! why dost thou look toward the desert to behold the return of thy son? These are not his heroes, dark on the heath; nor is that the voice of Calmar. It is but the distant grove, Alcletha! but the roar of the mountain wind!" . . .

Such was the song of Carril, when Cuthullin lay on his shield. The bards rested on their harps. Sleep fell softly around. The son of Semo was awake alone. His soul was fixed on war. The burning oaks be-



gan to decay. Faint red light is spread around. A feeble voice is heard. The ghost of Calmar came! He stalked dimly along the beam. Dark is the wound in his side. His hair is disordered and loose. Joy sits pale on his face. He seems to invite Cuthullin to his cave.

"Son of the cloudy night!" said the rising chief of Erin. "Why dost thou bend thy dark eyes on me, ghost of the noble Calmar? Wouldst thou frighten me, O Matha's son! from the battles of Cormac? Thy hand was not feeble in war, neither was thy voice for peace. How art thou changed, chief of Lara! if thou now dost advise to fly! But, Calmar, I never fled. I never feared the ghosts of night. Small is their knowledge, weak their hands; their dwelling is in the wind. But my soul grows in danger, and rejoices in the noise of steel. Retire thou to thy cave! Thou art not Calmar's ghost. He delighted in battle. His arm was like the thunder of heaven!" He retired in his blast with joy, for he had heard the voice of his praise.

The faint beam of the morning rose. The sound of Caithbat's buckler spread. Green Erin's warriors convened, like the roar of many streams. The horn of war is heard over Lego. The mighty Torlath came. "Why dost thou come with thy thousands, Cuthullin?" said the chief on Lego. "I know the strength of thy arm. Thy soul is an unextinguished fire. Why fight we not on the plain, and let our hosts behold our deeds? Let them behold us like roaring waves that tumble round a rock; the mariners hasten away, and look on their strife with fear."

"Thou risest like the sun on my soul," replied the son of Semo. "Thine arm is mighty, O Torlath! and worthy of my wrath. Retire, ye men of Ullin, to Slimora's shady side. Behold the chief of Erin in the day of his fame. Carril! tell to mighty Connal, if Cuthullin must fall,—tell him I accused the winds which roar on Togorma's waves. Never was he absent in battle, when the strife of my fame arose. Let his sword be before Cormac like the beam of heaven. Let his counsel sound in Temora, in the day of danger."

He rushed, in the sound of his arms, like the terrible spirit of Loda, when he comes in the roar of a thousand storms, and scatters battles from his eyes. He sits on a cloud over Lochlin's seas. His mighty hand is on his sword. Winds lift his flaming locks! The waning moon half lights his dreadful face. His features, blended in darkness, arise to view. So terrible was Cuthullin in the day of his fame. Torlath fell by his hand. His heroes mourned. They gather round the chief, like the clouds of the desert. A thousand swords rose at once; a thousand arrows flew; but the son of Semo stood like a rock in the midst of a roaring sea. They fell around. He strode in blood. Dark Slimora echoed wide. The sons of Ullin came. The battle spread over Lego. The chief of Erin overcame. He returned over the field with his fame. But pale he returned! The joy of his face was dark. He rolled his eyes in silence. The sword hung, unsheathed, in his hand. His spear bent at every step.

"Carril," said the chief in secret, "the strength of Cuthullin fails.

My days are with the years that are past. No morning of mine shall arise. They shall seek me at Temora, but I shall not be found. Cormac will weep in his hall, and say, 'Where is Erin's chief?' But my name is renowned! my fame in the song of bards. The youth will say in secret, 'O let me die as Cuthullin died! Renown clothed him like a robe. The light of his fame is great.' Draw the arrow from my side. Lay Cuthullin beneath that oak. Place the shield of Cathba near, that they may behold me amidst the arms of my fathers!"

"And is the son of Semo fallen?" said Carril with a sigh. "Mournful are Tura's walls. Sorrow dwells at Dunscaith. Thy spouse is left alone in her youth. The son of thy love is alone! He shall come to Bragela, and ask her why she weeps. He shall lift his eyes to the wall, and see his father's sword. 'Whose sword is that?' he will say. The soul of his mother is sad." . . .

By the dark rolling waves of Lego they raised the hero's tomb. Luath at a distance lies. The song of bards rose over the dead.

"Blest be thy soul, son of Semo! Thou wert mighty in battle. Thy strength was like the strength of a stream; thy speed like the eagle's wing. Thy path in battle was terrible; the steps of death were behind thy sword. Blest be thy soul, son of Semo, car-borne chief of Dunscaith! Thou hast not fallen by the sword of the mighty, neither was thy blood on the spear of the brave. The arrow came, like the sting of death in a blast; nor did the feeble hand which drew the bow perceive it. Peace to thy soul, in thy cave, chief of the isle of mist!" . . .





## BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

[The outline biographies that follow are in most cases abridged from the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Particular references to this are to "D. N. B."]

The bibliographical notes make no pretension to completeness, but are intended to suggest texts and critical references convenient for the student. In addition to the books mentioned under particular authors, the following are of use for the whole period: Gosse's *Eighteenth Century Literature*; T. S. Perry's *English Literature of the Eighteenth Century*; Dennis's *The Age of Pope*; Secombe's *The Age of Johnson*; Leslie Stephen's *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century* and *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*; and Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*.

References are not given for Cowper, Gray, and Pope, as these are more properly treated in the collections covering eighteenth-century poetry.]

JOSEPH ADDISON was born at Milston, Wiltshire, May 1, 1672. He attended the Charterhouse School and Queen's College, Oxford (M. A., 1693); held a fellowship till 1711; experimented in poetical composition, some of his writings being included by Dryden in his *Miscellany Poems*, 1693-94; traveled on the Continent, 1699-1703; became Under-Secretary of State, 1705; Member of Parliament from 1708 till his death; was the centre of the group of wits that frequented Button's coffee-house, an establishment founded by a protégé of Addison's about 1711; married the Countess of Warwick, 1716; retired from government service in 1718, with a pension of £1500; died June 17, 1719. Addison's writings include *The Campaign*, a poem on the battle of Blenheim, 1704; *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy*, 1705; *Fair Rosamond*, the text of an opera, 1707; contributions to *The Tatler*, 1709-10, *The Spectator*, 1711-12 (see the note on page 141), *The Guardian*, 1713, *The Spectator* continued, 1714, and *The Freeholder*, 1716; *Cato*, a tragedy, 1713; *The Drummer*, a comedy (not acknowledged), 1716; besides Latin poems, political pamphlets, and other periodical writings.

Addison's Works are collected in six volumes, in both an English and an American edition of 1856. There are also many separate editions of *The Spectator*, of which the best is that published by Dent in 1898. This and the other periodicals with which Addison was connected are also conveniently found in Chalmers's *British Essayists*. Good selections from Addison's prose have been made by T. Arnold (Clarendon Press), Wendell and Greenough (Ginn and Co., Boston), and E. B. Reed (Holt, N. Y.). Dr. Johnson's Life of Addison is still standard. More recent biographies are those of Leslie Stephen in the D. N. B., and of W. J. Courthope in the Men of Letters series. For criticism, see the introductions to the three volumes of selections mentioned above, and the three biographies; also Minto's

*Manual of English Prose Literature*. Other critical accounts are Hazlitt's (in *English Comic Writers*), Thackeray's (in *English Humourists*), and Macaulay's. An important account of Addison's relation to the literary conditions of his time is found in Beljame's *Le Public et les Hommes de Lettres au Dixhuitième Siècle*.

GEORGE BERKELEY was born in Ireland, March 12, 1685. He attended Trinity College, Dublin (B. A., 1704); became a fellow; studied natural science and philosophy with much zeal, and published three works setting forth a new theory, sometimes called monistic idealism; became junior dean and Greek Lecturer at Trinity; visited England, 1713, making the acquaintance of Addison, Steele, and Pope; was chaplain to the ambassador to Sicily, and traveling tutor to a young gentleman; became Dean of Derry, 1724; sailed to America, 1728, remaining three years in Rhode Island; planned a Christian college for the Bermudas, but failed to receive the necessary support; became Bishop of Cloyne, 1734; retired to Oxford, 1752, and died there, January 14, 1753. Berkeley's chief writings are: *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*, 1709; *Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, 1710; *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, 1713; *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher*, 1732; *The Querist*, 1735-37; *Siris, a Chain of Philosophical Reflections and Inquiries concerning the Virtues of Tar-Water*, 1744.

The *Life and Letters of Berkeley*, by A. C. Fraser (Oxford, 1871), is the standard biography. Fraser also edited Berkeley's Works in 1901. The Dialogues are published separately in the Bohn Library. On Berkeley's prose style one may profitably read the introductory note by Saintsbury, in Craik's *English Prose*, volume iv.

LORD BOLINGBROKE (HENRY ST. JOHN) was born at Battersea, October, 1678; attended Eton; led a life of much dissipation; was elected Member of Parliament, 1700, and became a Tory leader, being eventually Secretary at War and Secretary of State; was made Viscount Bolingbroke in 1712; lost his office on the accession of George I; was impeached and attainted by the new Whig Parliament, and fled to France, 1714; became Secretary of State to James the Pretender, but was dismissed in 1716; being pardoned in 1723, he returned to England, and again engaged in politics; became an intimate of the poet Pope; retired again to France in 1735, spending most of his time there till his final return to England in 1743 or 1744; lived in retirement till his death on December 12, 1751. Bolingbroke's writings include many pamphlets; among the most important of those published in his lifetime are the *Letter on the Spirit of Patriotism* and *The Idea of a Patriot King*, 1749; after his death appeared *Letters on the Study and Use of History*, *The True Use of Retirement and Study*, *Reflections upon Exile*, *Reflections on the State of the Nation*, *Essays addressed to Alexander Pope*, and others.

There is no collected edition of Bolingbroke's works. The best

authorities on his life and philosophy are A. Hassall's *Bolingbroke*, 1889; Churton Collins's *Bolingbroke, A Historical Study*, 1886; and W. Sichel's *Bolingbroke and his Times*, 1901-02. See also Leslie Stephen's article in the D. N. B., and his *History of English Thought in the 18th Century*.

JAMES BOSWELL was born on his father's estate in Scotland, in 1740. He attended school at Edinburgh, and studied law both there and at Glasgow; frequently visited London; procured an introduction to Dr. Johnson in 1763; traveled and studied on the Continent; in Italy made the acquaintance of Paoli, the Corsican patriot; practiced law in Scotland, always with many intervals spent at London; accompanied Dr. Johnson on a tour to Scotland and the Hebrides, 1773; in the same year was elected a member of Johnson's Club; came to London to reside, 1789; practiced law unsuccessfully, and spent much time on his *Life of Johnson*; fell into much dissipation during his last years, dying May 19, 1795. Boswell's writings include *An Account of Corsica . . . and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli*, 1768; *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*, 1786; and *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, 1791; besides numerous pamphlets.

The standard edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson* is that of G. Birkbeck Hill, in six volumes, 1887; there is also a convenient edition in two volumes in Everyman's Library; and Henry Holt and Co. publish a text abridged with good judgment. The *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* is included in the complete editions of the *Life*; it is also published separately in the Temple Classics. For Boswell's life see the article by Leslie Stephen, in the D. N. B.; a Life of Boswell by P. Fitzgerald (1891); also H. G. Graham's *Scottish Men of Letters in the Eighteenth Century* (1901). Most important of the critical writings on Boswell are the essays of Macaulay and Carlyle. Mention should also be made of an essay by Austin Dobson, on "Boswell's Predecessors and Editors," in his *Miscellanies*, 1899.

EDMUND BURKE was born in Dublin, in January, 1729. He attended Trinity College (B. A., 1748); came to London and studied law in the Middle Temple; became private secretary to Lord Rockingham, the prime minister, 1765; was Member of Parliament from 1765 to 1794; made notable speeches on the American Revolution (1774-76) and on Indian affairs (1785); entered the ministry as Paymaster of the Forces, 1782; opened the case for the impeachment of Warren Hastings, Governor-General of India, 1788; spoke against the French republic, 1790, and broke with Fox and his other Whig friends on account of his opposition to the Revolution; was pensioned by the crown on his retirement in 1794; lost his only son in the same year; died at his estate (Beaconsfield) July 9, 1797. Burke's writings include: *A Vindication of Natural Society*, 1756; *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 1756; *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, 1770;



*Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*, 1777; *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1790; *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, 1791; *Letter to a Noble Lord*, 1796; *Thoughts on the Prospects of a Peace with the Regicide Directory*, 1796; besides very many letters, pamphlets, and speeches.

There is no standard or complete edition of Burke's works. *Burke's Select Works*, edited by E. J. Payne, in three volumes (Clarendon Press), is the most serviceable. A good volume of selections is edited by Bliss Perry (Holt, N. Y.). The standard biography is that by John Morley, in the Men of Letters series. For interpretations of Burke's character, besides Morley's, see Payne's and Perry's introductions, in the volumes already cited, and Woodrow Wilson's essay (in his *Mere Literature*) on "The Interpreter of English Liberty." On Burke's style there is an important passage in Hazlitt's essay on "The Prose Style of Poets," in *The Plain Speaker*; see also an essay by Augustine Birrell in *Obiter Dicta*, second series.

FRANCES BURNEY (MADAME D'ARBLAY) was born at King's Lynn, June 13, 1752. She was educated at home (her father, Dr. Charles Burney, being a distinguished musician); wrote fiction and poetry from her childhood; published her first novel, *Evelina*, secretly in 1778, and through its success became famous, in particular winning the friendship of Mrs. Thrale and Dr. Johnson; was appointed Second Keeper of the Robes to the Queen, 1786, and kept an important diary of her experiences at the palace; retired in 1791, and in 1793 married General d'Arblay, a French refugee; wrote one or two plays, but without success; lived in France, 1802-12, later returning to England, where she died on January 6, 1840. Her works are *Evelina*, 1778; *Cecilia*, 1782; *Camilla*, 1796; *The Wanderer*, 1814; *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, 1832; *Diary and Letters*, published 1842 and 1846.

The best edition of Mme. d'Arblay's *Diary and Letters* is that edited by Austin Dobson (six volumes, 1904-05). Mr. Dobson has also written her life, under the title *Fanny Burney*, for the Men of Letters series. For criticism, see Macaulay's essay on Madame d'Arblay, and a short essay by Saintsbury, in his *Essays in English Literature*, second series.

LORD CHESTERFIELD (PHILIP STANHOPE, fourth Earl of Chesterfield) was born in London, September 22, 1694. He studied at Cambridge for a year, then traveled on the continent; became Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales, and entered the House of Commons before he was quite twenty-one; succeeded to the peerage, 1726; became a member of the Privy Council, 1728, and in the same year ambassador to the Hague; while on the Continent became intimate with Mlle. du Bouchet, by whom he had a son, Philip, to whom his principal correspondence was addressed; was dismissed from the government, 1733; later wrote pamphlets

against the administration of Walpole, and became the leader of the opposition in the House of Lords; entered the Pelham ministry, 1748, and became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1745, and Secretary of State, 1746; thereafter retired from office, built Chesterfield House, collected paintings, corresponded with men of letters, and gave much attention to the education of his natural son; died March 24, 1773. Chesterfield's writings consist largely of his letters and political tracts.

Chesterfield's Letters have been edited by J. Bradshaw (three volumes, 1892) and by the Earl of Carnarvon (2d edition, 1890). There are many selections. The standard biography is by W. H. Craig (1907). For criticism, see an essay by Churton Collins in his *Essays and Studies*, and one by Paul Elmer More in *Shelburne Essays*, fifth series.

COLLEY CIBBER was born in London, November 6, 1671. He had only a free-school education; served for a time in the army; in 1690 joined the companies of the Theatre Royal, and acted for almost the whole of his remaining life; brought out his first play in 1696; about 1711 acquired a share in the management of Drury Lane Theatre; in 1730 was appointed Poet Laureate, as a reward for Whig loyalty; acted only occasionally after 1733; quarreled with Pope, and displaced Theobald as the hero of *The Dunciad*; died December 12, 1757. Cibber's writings include about 30 plays, 1696-1745, some worthless odes, and the *Apology* (1740).

The *Apology* has been edited by R. W. Lowe (1889). For Cibber's life, see the article by Joseph Knight in the D. N. B.

DANIEL DEFOE (whose real name was Foe, altered by him about 1703) was born in London, in 1660 or 1661. He was educated at a Dissenters' academy, and took a course designed for the ministry, but about 1685 decided to go into business; in 1688 joined the army of King William; in 1695 was appointed to an office in the revenue service; about 1700 became a pamphleteer in defense of various policies of William the Third; founded the *Review of the Affairs of France*, conducting it 1704-13; was sent to Scotland on a secret mission for the government, 1705; wrote pamphlets on behalf of Harley's policies, against the Jacobites, etc.; for some time contributed to *Mist's Journal*, a Jacobite organ, in such a way as to hamper the cause it was designed to support; in later years devoted himself to fiction and miscellaneous writings; died, apparently in obscurity and poverty, April 26, 1731. Defoe's writings, which were published very largely without name or under pseudonyms, have been estimated to number some 250; among the more important are the *Essay upon Projects*, 1697; *The True-Born Englishman* (a verse satire), 1701; *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, 1702; *Appeal to Honor and Justice*, 1715; *Robinson Crusoe*, 1719; *Moll Flanders*, 1722; *Journal of the Plague Year*, 1722; *Complete English Tradesman*, 1725; *History of the Devil*, 1726.

There is no standard text of Defoe's works, nor any approach to a complete edition, though there are several collections of his fiction, of which the best is the *Romances and Narratives*, edited by G. A. Aitken (1895-1900). Miscellaneous writings may be found in part in Morley's *Earlier Life and Works of Defoe* (Carisbrooke Library), Arber's English Garner, and the Bohn Library. The standard biography is still (though now partly obsolete) Lee's *Daniel Defoe: Life and recently Discovered Writings* (1869); a good shorter life is that by William Minto, in the Men of Letters series. No student of Defoe can neglect the Bibliographical Notes published by W. P. Trent in *The Nation* for June 6, July 11, and August 29, 1907. For criticism, besides Minto, see an essay by Leslie Stephen, on "Defoe's Novels," in *Hours in a Library*, and certain pages in Walter Raleigh's *The English Novel*.

JOHN DENNIS was born in London in 1657. He entered Caius College, Cambridge (B.A., 1679); traveled on the Continent; later had a small government office under the patronage of the Duke of Marlborough; wrote for the stage, 1697-1708, with small success; quarreled with Pope, and wrote pamphlets against him, from 1711; in later years devoted himself largely to criticism; died in poverty, January 6, 1734. Dennis's writings include some eight plays; *The Impartial Critic*, 1693; *The Usefulness of the Stage*, 1698; *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry*, 1701; *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*, 1704; *Letters on the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare*, 1711; *The Stage Defended*, 1726; and many pamphlets.

Most of Dennis's writings can be found only in the (now rare) collections made during his lifetime. *The Impartial Critic* has been partly reproduced in Spingarn's *Critical Essays of the 17th Century*, and the *Letters on Shakespeare* in Nichol Smith's *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare*. For biography, see H. G. Paul's *John Dennis* (1911); for criticism, Paul's monograph, Saintsbury's *History of Criticism*, and Lounsbury's *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*. There are also interesting references to Dennis in Dr. Johnson's *Lives of Pope and Addison*.

HENRY FIELDING was born at Sharpham Park, Somersetshire, April 22, 1707. He attended Eton; then went to London, and began to write for the stage; studied at Leyden, 1728-29; on returning to England, became a playwright; married in 1734, but appears to have led an irregular life; managed a theatre in the Haymarket, 1736-37; studied law in the Middle Temple, and in 1740 began to practice, but with little success; began his career as a novelist with a parody of Richardson, 1742; published journals in support of the government during the rebellion of 1745 and later; in 1748 was appointed Justice of the Peace, giving much attention to his duties, and to the problems of crime and poverty; made a voyage to Portugal, to aid his failing health, 1754, and died at Lisbon on October 8. Fielding's



works include some twenty-four plays, 1728-43; *Joseph Andrews*, 1742; *Miscellanies* (including *Jonathan Wild* and many satiric writings), 1743; *Tom Jones*, 1749; *Amelia*, 1751; *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, 1755.

The best edition of the Works of Fielding is that in ten volumes, with a biographical essay by Leslie Stephen, 1882. His life was written by Austin Dobson for the Men of Letters series (revised edition, 1900). For criticism, see Thackeray's *English Humourists*, an essay on "Fielding's Novels" in Leslie Stephen's *Hours in a Library*, and the various histories of the novel, particularly those by Stoddard and Raleigh.

EDWARD GIBBON was born at Putney, April 27, 1737; attended Westminster School, and entered Magdalen College, Oxford, 1752, but left the next year on account of a conversion to Roman Catholicism; was sent by his father to Switzerland, to be educated by a Calvinist minister; acquired French readily, and renounced his Catholic faith; studied history with extraordinary thoroughness; returned to England, 1758, and served in the Hampshire militia, 1759-62; made further journeys to the Continent, and at Rome, 1764, formed the design of his history of the Roman empire; joined Dr. Johnson's Club, 1774; was elected Professor of History at the Royal Academy, 1774; Member of Parliament, 1774-83, but always inactive in politics; became famous after the appearance of the first volume of his *History*, 1776, and in particular was severely attacked by churchmen for his chapters on the rise of Christianity; removed to Lausanne, 1783, to finish his book, returning to England at the time of its completion, 1788, but only temporarily; again returned to England, 1793, and died there, January 16, 1794. Gibbon's writings include: *Essai sur l'Etude de la Littérature*, 1761; *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1776-88; *Vindication*, 1779; *Memoirs of my Life and Writings* (compiled by Lord Sheffield from various MSS.), 1796.

The *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* has been edited with notes by Dean Milman and other scholars; the standard American edition is in six volumes, 1880. The *Memoirs*, in the form of their publication by Sheffield, have been edited by O. F. Emerson (Athenæum Press, 1898) and G. Birkbeck Hill, 1900. In 1807 John Murray edited and published the original MSS., under the title *Gibbon's Autobiographies*. For biography, see the article by Leslie Stephen in the D. N. B., and the life by J. C. Morison in the Men of Letters series. There is an essay on "Gibbon's Autobiography" in Leslie Stephen's *Studies of a Biographer*, volume I.

WILLIAM GODWIN was born at Wisbeach, Cambridgeshire, March 3, 1756. He attended Hoxton Academy; studied philosophy and theology from the standpoint of a dissenter, and preached in nonconformist churches, 1777-83; became a Whig of the radical

group, an enthusiast for the French Revolution, and an atheist; after the publication of *Political Justice* was the recognized representative of English radicalism on the theoretical side; later modified his views, especially in favor of the domestic affections; in 1797 married Mary Wollstonecraft, a woman's-rights advocate, by whom he had a daughter Mary, who eventually married the poet Shelley; in his later life was a friend of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and was restored by the latter to some sort of religious faith; attempted to write tragedies, but without success; was in much financial difficulty till he obtained a sinecure office in 1833; died April 7, 1836. Godwin's writings include: *Inquiry concerning Political Justice*, 1793; *Things as they Are, or the Adventures of Caleb Williams*, 1794; *St. Leon*, 1799; *Life of Chaucer*, 1803; and many miscellaneous works, 1809-34.

Godwin's writings have not been collected in a modern edition, though there are various reprints of the novels. The section of *Political Justice* on Property has been edited by H. S. Salt, and published under the title of *Godwin's Political Justice*, 1890. For biography, see Kegan Paul's *William Godwin, his Friends and Contemporaries*, 1876. For criticism, see Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age*, Stephen's *History of English Thought in the 18th Century*, and an essay on "Godwin's Novels" in Stephen's *Studies of a Biographer*, volume II.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH was born at Pallas, a village in Ireland, November 19, 1728. He entered Trinity College (B. A., 1749); was a poor student, and for a time an idler after his graduation; studied medicine at Edinburgh, and later on the continent, wandering through various European countries; reached London in destitution, about 1756; became an usher in a school; later did hack-work for Griffiths the publisher, and attempted to practice medicine, with small success; wrote for magazines conducted by Smollett, 1757-60, then for Newbery's *Public Ledger*; became a friend of Dr. Johnson's in 1761, and was one of the original members of the Literary Club; acquired a reputation as a poet through *The Traveler*, 1764; wrote miscellaneous books to order for various publishers; produced comedies successfully in 1768 and 1773; suffered almost invariably from poverty, through his spendthriftiness, and was also involved in many journalistic quarrels; died April 4, 1774. Goldsmith's writings include *The Bee*, 1759; *The Citizen of the World*, 1762; *The Traveler*, 1764; *Essays*, 1765; *The Vicar of Wakefield*, 1766; *The Good-Natured Man*, 1768; *The Deserted Village*, 1770; *History of England*, 1771; *She Stoops to Conquer*, 1774; *History of the Earth and Animated Nature*, 1774; and various biographies.

Goldsmith's Works were edited by J. W. M. Gibbs, in five volumes, 1884-86; there is also a convenient one-volume edition in the Globe series. *The Citizen of the World* and the *Essays* have been edited for the Temple Classics. There are good biographies by William Black, in the Men of Letters series, Austin Dobson, in the Great

Writers series, and, more recently, F. F. Moore (1910). See also Macaulay's article, originally written for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and DeQuincey's, in his volume of *Biographies*. For criticism, in addition to these works, see also Thackeray's *English Humourists*. There is a brief but valuable essay on *The Citizen of the World* in Dobson's *Eighteenth Century Vignettes*, first series.

DAVID HUME was born at Edinburgh, April 26 (O. S.), 1711. He probably entered the University of Edinburgh about 1723, but almost nothing is known of his education; originally intended to practice law, but abandoned it for literature and philosophy; was in France, 1734-37, studying and writing, and on his return to England published his first book, which was unsuccessful; nevertheless persisted in his philosophical writing, and with his *Essays* met some success; was accused of heresy and atheism, but never formally renounced Christianity; became secretary to General Sinclair on foreign missions, 1747-48; after 1751 turned from philosophy to history; was appointed Librarian of the Faculty of Advocates, 1752; was a member of the embassy to Paris, 1763-66 and 1767-68; befriended Rousseau, and took him to England; spent his last years quietly in Edinburgh, where he died August 25, 1776. Hume's works include the *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1739-40; *Essays Moral and Political*, 1741-42; *Philosophical Essays*, 1748; *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, 1751; *History of England*, 1754-61; *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, 1779.

The standard edition of Hume's *Essays* is that by T. H. Green and T. H. Grose (revised ed., 1889). Hume's life has been written by T. H. Huxley for the Men of Letters series, and by H. Calderwood for the Famous Scots series. For criticism, see Stephen's *History of English Thought in the 18th Century*.

RICHARD HURD was born at Congreve, Staffordshire, January 13, 1720. He entered Emmanuel College, Cambridge (B. A., 1739), and went into the church; gave much time to writing on theological and literary subjects; was made Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, 1775; preceptor to the King's sons, 1776; Bishop of Worcester, 1781; acquired a large library; died May 28, 1808. Hurd's writings include an edition of Horace's *Ars Poetica*, 1749; *Discourse on Poetical Imitation*, 1751; *Moral and Political Dialogues*, 1759; *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, 1762; *Prophecies concerning the Christian Church*, 1772.

Hurd's Works were collected in 1811. His *Life and Writings*, by Kilvert, appeared in 1860. On the significance of the *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, see Beers's *History of Romanticism in the 18th Century*.

SAMUEL JOHNSON was born at Lichfield, September 18, 1709. He entered Pembroke College, Oxford, but left without a degree for



lack of means; was a precocious scholar, but always in poor health; for a time was usher in a school; did his first literary work on a translation, 1735; in the same year married Mrs. Porter, with whom he opened a boys' school, which was a failure; went to London in 1737, and secured literary hack-work; was employed to report parliamentary debates for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1741-43; began his plans for an edition of Shakespeare about 1745, and for a dictionary in 1747; his tragedy *Irene* was produced through the friendship of Garrick in 1749, but without success; in 1750 founded *The Rambler*; lost his wife, 1752, and lived alone thereafter, except for dependents whom he befriended; obtained an M.A. from Oxford, 1755; edited the *Literary Magazine*, 1756-58; received a pension from the crown, 1762; joined Sir Joshua Reynolds in founding the Literary Club, 1763 or 1764; wrote political pamphlets for the Tory ministry, 1770-75; journeyed to Scotland with Boswell in 1773; was made LL.D. by Oxford, 1775; went to Paris with his friends the Thrales in 1775; his health failed gradually, and he died December 13, 1784. Johnson's works include: *London* (poem), 1738; *Life of Savage*, 1744; *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (poem), 1749; *The Rambler*, 1752; *Dictionary, with a Grammar and History of the English Language*, 1755; *Idler* papers, 1758-60; *Rasselas*, 1759; an edition of the Plays of Shakespeare, with preface and notes, 1765; *Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland*, 1775; *Prefaces Biographical and Critical to the Works of the Most Eminent English Poets*, 1779-81.

Johnson's Works have been issued in various editions, but there is no complete critical text. His periodical writings are conveniently found in Chalmers's *British Essayists*. The *Lives of the Poets* have been edited by G. Birkbeck Hill, 1905; and there is a convenient edition of the *Chief Lives* (those of Milton, Dryden, Swift, Addison, Pope, and Gray), with essays by Macaulay, Carlyle, and Matthew Arnold, published by Holt, N. Y. The Camelot Series includes a good selection of Johnson's *Essays*, edited by S. J. Reid. The Preface to Shakespeare may be found in Nichol Smith's *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare* and W. Raleigh's *Johnson on Shakespeare*. Selections from Johnson have been edited by C. G. Osgood for Holt's English Readings.

The standard biography is of course Boswell's (for editions, see Boswell); there is also a brief life by Leslie Stephen in the Men of Letters Series (see also Stephen's article in the D. N. B.). For criticism see the essay by Macaulay, originally written for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*; Leslie Stephen's essay on "Dr. Johnson's Writings," in *Hours in a Library*; Birkbeck Hill's *Dr. Johnson, his Friends and his Critics* (1878); and Professor Raleigh's lecture on *Samuel Johnson* (1907).

MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS was born in London, July 9, 1775. He attended Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford; began to write fiction at the age of sixteen; traveled on the Continent, and

met Goethe at Weimar; became a German scholar, and translated early works of Goethe and Schiller; made a reputation through *The Monk*, which was partly stimulated by Mrs. Radcliffe's *Udolpho*; was Member of Parliament, 1796-1802; made the acquaintance of Scott, and secured his aid as a contributor to *Tales of Wonder*; went to Jamaica, 1815, to see an estate he had inherited, and made a code of laws for the welfare of his slaves; visited Byron and Shelley on the Continent; died at sea, May 14, 1818. Lewis's works include *Ambrosio, or The Monk*, 1795; *Tales of Terror*, 1799; *Tales of Wonder*, 1801; *Romantic Tales*, 1808; besides numerous plays and translations. *The Monk* has been reprinted in various editions; the best is in three volumes, 1906. Lewis's *Life and Correspondence* was published 1839. For his connection with the fiction of the romantic movement, see Beers's *History of Romanticism in the 18th Century*.

JAMES MACPHERSON was born in Inverness-shire, Scotland, October 27, 1736. He studied at Aberdeen and Edinburgh; wrote much verse while still an undergraduate; in 1759 displayed to his friends fragments of Gaelic poetry which he professed to have translated, and was advised to complete and publish them; on the appearance of the poems his veracity was attacked, and much discussion followed, especially in England; on the publication of Dr. Johnson's attack on the authenticity of Macpherson's publications, Macpherson engaged in a quarrel with him; he denied all the imputations, but never made any serious effort to prove the true character of his MSS.; after 1763 abandoned his work as "translator;" went to Florida as secretary to the Governor, 1764; on his return did some work as political pamphleteer and amateur historian; was English agent for the Nabob of Arcot, about 1780; was Member of Parliament from 1780 till his death on February 17, 1796. Macpherson's writings include: *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, collected in the Highlands*, 1760; *Fingal, an ancient epic poem, with other poems composed by Ossian*, 1763; *Temora, etc.*, 1763; *The Iliad of Homer, translated into prose*, 1773; *History of Great Britain from the Restoration to the accession of the House of Hanover*, 1775.

There are several editions of the Ossianic "poems," but no critical text; a convenient edition was edited by William Sharp, 1896. The best biographical and critical accounts of Macpherson are T. B. Saunders's *Life and Letters of James Macpherson*, 1895, and J. S. Smart's *Macpherson, an Episode in Literature*, 1905. On the Ossianic poetry, see Shairp's essay on "The Poetry of the Scottish Highlands," in *Aspects of Poetry*, and Beers's *History of Romanticism in the 18th Century*.

BERNARD MANDEVILLE was born in Holland about 1760. He was educated at Leyden (M. D., 1691); emigrated to England, and practiced medicine unsuccessfully; was accused of writing in favor of the use of liquor, at the behest of distillers; rarely moved in society

of the better sort, but attracted attention and controversy by the doctrines he expounded in his writings; of his later life little is known; he died in 1733. Mandeville's writings include *The Grumbling Hive* (verse), 1705; *The Fable of the Bees*, etc., 1714; *Free Thoughts on Religion, the Church, and Natural Happiness*, 1720; and various pamphlets in verse and prose.

There is no modern edition of *The Fable of the Bees*, and no biography of Mandeville. On his doctrines see Leslie Stephen's essay on "Mandeville's Fable of the Bees," in *Free Thinking and Plain Speaking*; also Stephen's *History of English Thought in the 18th Century*. Compare also Browning's interpretation of Mandeville's doctrines in *Parleyings with Certain People*.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU was born in London, May, 1689. She was educated by a tutor, and exhibited remarkable ability, especially in the classics; married Edward Wortley Montagu, a Whig Member of Parliament, 1712; was well known as a wit, and exchanged letters and verses with Pope; went to Turkey in 1717, her husband being ambassador to the Porte; returning to England, she became a leader in polite society; went to Twickenham to be near Pope, but later quarreled with him, and engaged in a war of satires; in 1739 went abroad, living successively at Avignon, Brescia, and Venice; did not return to England till after her husband's death, in 1761; died August 21, 1762. The only writings of Lady Montagu published during her lifetime were some poems, *Town Eclogues*, 1716 and 1747.

The correspondence of Lady Montagu was edited by Moy Thomas in 1861; the letters are reprinted in the Bohn Library. For her biography, see Thomas's sketch; Leslie Stephen's article in the D. N. B.; and G. Paston's *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and her Times*, 1907. A convenient reprint, with comments, of many of the letters, forms A. R. Ropes's *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 1892.

THOMAS PAINE was born at Thetford, Norfolk, January 29, 1737. He was educated only at the grammar school; went to sea in a privateer about 1754; later worked in London, and had an appointment in the revenue service, from which he was dismissed in 1774; in London met Benjamin Franklin, who gave him letters to America; reached America November, 1774, and became connected with a Philadelphia bookseller; made a reputation as pamphleteer on behalf of the revolutionists; served in the revolutionary army, as secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, and as secretary to the Pennsylvania Assembly; went to France on a mission, 1781; returned to England in 1787, and devoted himself to the invention of an iron bridge; fled to Paris after the publication of *The Rights of Man*, 1791; was elected a member of the French Convention, 1792, and was influential till the fall of the Girondins; was arrested in December, 1793, and released on the demand of the American minis-



ter; wrote pamphlets attacking Washington, believing him ungrateful for Paine's services; established a French community of "Theophilanthropists," 1797; returned to the United States, 1802; lived in New York during his last years, and was viewed with suspicion because of his anti-religious writings and his drinking habits; died July 8, 1809. Paine's writings include: *Common Sense*, 1776; *The Crisis* (16 pamphlets), 1776-83; *The Rights of Man*, 1791-92; *The Age of Reason*, 1794-95 (part 3, 1807); *Letters to Citizens of the United States*, 1802; besides very many political and social pamphlets.

There have been various editions of Paine's works; the standard is now that of Moncure Conway (1894-96), who also wrote the *Life of Paine*, 1892. For criticism, see M. C. Tyler's *Literary History of the American Revolution* and Stephen's *History of English Thought in the 18th Century*.

ANN RADCLIFFE (née Ward) was born in London, July 9, 1764. She married William Radcliffe, subsequently proprietor of the *English Chronicle*, in 1787; began to write fiction in 1789; after 1797 ceased to write for publication, excepting a memoir of travels; died February 7, 1823. Her writings include: *A Sicilian Romance*, 1790; *The Romance of the Forest*, 1791; *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794; *The Italian*, 1797; *A Journey through Holland and the Western Frontier of Germany*, 1795. A few other works were published posthumously.

Mrs. Radcliffe's novels have been frequently reprinted, especially *The Mysteries of Udolpho*; a convenient edition of this was published by Routledge, 1891. For biography, see Garnett's article in the D. N. B.; for criticism, Beers's *History of Romanticism in the 18th Century* and Raleigh's *English Novel*.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS was born at Plympton-Earl's, Devonshire, July 16, 1723. He was educated only at the grammar school; early showing talent for drawing, he was apprenticed in 1740 to the painter Hudson; soon became successful as a painter of portraits; studied in Italy, 1749-52; was so much sought after, on his return, that in 1759 he had 156 sitters; became a friend of Garrick, Goldsmith, and Johnson; founded the Literary Club, commonly called Dr. Johnson's Club, 1763 or 1764; was made President of the Royal Academy on its foundation in 1768; delivered several discourses to its members and students; was knighted in April, 1769; continued to paint actively till the failure of his eyesight, in 1790; died February 23, 1792. Reynolds's only writings were the Discourses delivered at the Academy, and the few papers he contributed to Dr. Johnson's *Idler* series.

The *Literary Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* were published by Bohn, in two volumes, 1899-90, with a memoir by H. W. Beechey. See also Reynolds's Life, by Lord Ronald Gower (1902), and the article by Cosmo Monkhouse in the D. N. B.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON was born in Derbyshire, in 1689. He received but little education, but early became known among his friends as a skillful letter-writer; in 1706 was apprenticed to a stationer; later learned the printing business, and in 1719 took it up for himself; printed various periodicals, and the Journals of the House of Commons; in 1739 engaged to write a volume of model letters for uncultivated persons, a design which led to his first novel; from this time was distinguished as a novelist, though he continued his printing business till his death, on July 4, 1761. Richardson's only important writings are the three novels: *Pamela*, 1740; *Clarissa Harlowe*, 1747-8; *Sir Charles Grandison*, 1753.

The best edition of Richardson's Works is in twelve volumes, 1893, with a prefatory chapter by Leslie Stephen. There are many reprints of the individual novels, some of them conveniently abridged. For biography, see *Richardson's Correspondence*, with biographical introduction by Mrs. Barbauld, 1804, and the life by Austin Dobson in the Men of Letters series. For criticism, see the essay on "Richardson's Novels" in Leslie Stephen's *Hours in a Library*; the various histories of English fiction; and J. Texte's *Rousseau and the Cosmopolitan Spirit in Literature* (English translation, 1899), — an important account of the connection of Richardson with the "sentimental movement" of the period.

LORD SHAFTESBURY (ANTHONY ASHLEY COOPER, third Earl of Shaftesbury) was born in London, February 26, 1671. He was tutored by the philosopher Locke; traveled and studied on the continent; was Member of Parliament, 1695-98; succeeded to the earldom in 1699; took part in politics as a Whig, but owing to a weak constitution avoided much activity; spent a year in Holland, 1703-04; resided chiefly in the country; went to Italy for his health in 1711, and died there on February 15, 1713. Shaftesbury's works are his miscellaneous essays, especially on philosophical and ethical themes; the chief ones were collected in his *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, and Times*, 1711.

There is an excellent edition of the *Characteristics*, edited by J. M. Robertson, 1900. For biography, see the *Life, Unpublished Letters, and Philosophical Regimen of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury*, by Benjamin Rand, 1900; for criticism, Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought in the 18th Century*.

TOBIAS GEORGE SMOLLETT was born in Dumbartonshire, Scotland, in March, 1721. He studied medicine at Glasgow, and was apprenticed to a surgeon in 1736; in 1739 went to London and sought to produce a tragedy he had written; obtained a position as surgeon in the West India squadron, 1741, and spent some time in Jamaica; settled as a surgeon in Westminster, 1744; wrote some pamphlets and satires; began his work as a novelist in 1748, and continued to divide his time between medicine and literature; edited the *Critical Review* from 1756 and the *British Magazine* from 1760;

undertook the innovation of publishing a novel as a serial in the latter periodical; engaged in many editorial undertakings, for aid in which he employed a corps of small writers; traveled on the Continent for his health, 1763-65; grew morose and embittered, and became involved in many quarrels; again went abroad, and died in Italy, September 17, 1771. Smollett's works include: *Roderick Random*, 1748; *Peregrine Pickle*, 1751; *Ferdinand Count Fathom*, 1753; *Complete History of England*, 1757-58; *Sir Launcelot Greaves*, 1762; *Travels through France and Italy*, 1766; *History and Adventures of an Atom*, 1769; *Expedition of Humphrey Clinker*, 1771.

The best edition of Smollett's novels is in twelve volumes, 1899-1900, edited by Saintsbury. For biography, see his *Life* by David Hannay, in the Great Writers series; for criticism, Thackeray's *English Humourists*, and the various histories of fiction.

RICHARD STEELE was born in Dublin, in March, 1672. He attended Charterhouse School, London, and Merton College, Oxford, leaving in 1694 without a degree; entered the army, and became a captain; began to write for the stage in 1701; was appointed state gazetteer in 1707; founded *The Tatler* in 1709; lost his gazetteership on account of political activity, 1710; joined Addison in *The Spectator*, 1711; engaged in political pamphleteering; was elected Member of Parliament, 1713, but was expelled the next year for "seditious libel"; engaged in various journalistic undertakings; on the accession of George I received several sinecure offices from the crown; was Member of Parliament again in 1715, and in the same year was knighted by the king; in 1719 engaged in a political quarrel with Addison; retired to his estate in Wales in 1724, and died there, September 1, 1729. Steele's writings include *The Christian Hero*, 1701; contributions to *The Tatler*, 1709-11; to *The Spectator*, 1711-12; to *The Guardian*, 1713; four comedies; and many pamphlets and short-lived periodicals.

There is no standard collection of Steele's works. For *The Spectator*, see Addison; *The Tatler* has been admirably edited by G. A. Aitken (four volumes, 1898). There are also well-edited volumes of selections from Steele in the Athenæum Press series (ed. G. R. Carpenter) and the Clarendon Press texts (ed. Austin Dobson). The authoritative biography is G. A. Aitken's (1889); see, for briefer use, the article by Dobson in the D. N. B. For criticism, see the references under Addison.

LAURENCE STERNE was born in Tipperary, Ireland, November 24, 1713. He attended school at Halifax, and Jesus College, Cambridge (B. A., 1736); entered the church, and received the vicarage of Sutton-in-the-Forest, which he held from 1738 to 1759; spent much time at York, and at Skelton Castle, the home of his friend Hall-Stevenson, with a social club which came to be called "The Demoniacs"; quarreled with his mother, and neglected her during her last years; contributed to Whig journals; was unfaithful to his



wife, who became temporarily insane; after the publication of the first volume of *Tristram Shandy* went to London and enjoyed his fame; received the living of Coxwold, and moved there in 1760; went to France for his health, 1762, and enjoyed a brilliant reception in Paris society; returned to England in 1764, but again visited the Continent, October, 1765, on the "sentimental journey;" from 1766 engaged in a prolonged flirtation with Mrs. Eliza Draper, the wife of an India official, and wrote for her the *Journal to Eliza*; was always in doubtful health, and, his weakness increasing, he died in London lodgings, March 18, 1768. Sterne's writings include *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, 1759-67; *Sermons of Mr. Yorick*, 1760-69; *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, 1768; and various letters, published posthumously.

The best edition of Sterne's Works is edited by Saintsbury (six volumes, 1894). There are also a convenient two-volume edition in Macmillan's Library of English Classics, and various reprints of *Tristram* and the *Sentimental Journey*. A critical biography was written by H. D. Traill for the Men of Letters series, but the authoritative Life is now that of W. L. Cross (1909). For criticism, see Thackeray's *English Humourists*; an essay by E. H. A. Scherer, in *Essays on English Literature*; an essay by Leslie Stephen, in *Hours in a Library*; an essay by P. E. More, in *Shelburne Essays*, third series; and the work by Texte cited under Richardson.

JONATHAN SWIFT was born at Dublin, November 30, 1667. He attended Trinity College (B. A., 1686); on going to England lived with Sir William Temple at Moor Park, and acted as his secretary; made unsuccessful efforts in poetry; entered the church, 1694, and received a living near Belfast; returned to Moor Park, 1696, and employed himself in study and in preparing Temple's memoirs for publication; made the acquaintance of Esther Johnson ("Stella"), a member of Temple's household; on Temple's death, in 1699, returned to Ireland, and resided there, in various ecclesiastical positions, for the rest of his life; made, however, frequent and sometimes prolonged visits to England; in 1701 was followed to Ireland by Stella, who thereafter resided near him till her death in 1728; in England became a friend of Addison and Pope, and had some influence in courtly circles as a powerful pamphleteer, — at first on the Whig side, later on the Tory; became Dean of St. Patrick's, 1713, but was disappointed in his hopes of a bishopric; was rumored to have been married to Stella, but the facts remain uncertain; in 1724 successfully opposed the introduction into Ireland of the currency called "Wood's Halfpence," by his *Drapier Letters*; joined Pope and Arbuthnot in the writing of the "Scriblerus" Miscellanies; after Stella's death became increasingly bitter and misanthropic, and after 1738 exhibited signs of mental decay; in 1742 was committed to the care of guardians; died October 19, 1745. Swift's works include: *A Tale of a Tub, with an account of a Battle between the Ancient and Modern Books*, 1704; *Argument on the Abolishing of Christianity in England*,

1708; *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse*, 1711; *Letters concerning the Brass Halfpence* ("by M. B. Drapier"), 1724; *Travels . . . by Lemuel Gulliver*, 1726; *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* (with Pope), 1727-29; *Collection of Genteel and Ingenious Conversation*, 1738; and very many pamphlets embodying discussions of English and Irish affairs and theological and social satire.

The standard edition of Swift's Works was made by Walter Scott; the second edition of this was reprinted in 1883. There are good volumes of selections edited by Henry Craik (Clarendon Press) and F. C. Prescott (Holt and Co.), and many reprints of *Gulliver's Travels* (one of the best being that in the Temple Classics). Swift's life has been written by Leslie Stephen, for the Men of Letters series, and by Henry Craik (1885). See also the important work by J. Churton Collins: *Swift, a Biographical and Critical Study*, 1893. Additional criticism may be found in Thackeray's *English Humourists*, and in an interesting essay in Miss Vida Scudder's *Social Ideals in English Letters*.

HORACE WALPOLE (fourth Earl of Orford) was born in London, September 24, 1717 (O. S.). He was educated at Eton and at King's College, Cambridge, leaving in 1739 to make a tour of the Continent in company with Thomas Gray; quarreled with Gray, and they separated in 1741, but were afterward reconciled and remained close friends; became Member of Parliament, and held several sinecure offices through the influence of his father, Sir Robert Walpole, prime minister; in 1747 took a house at Twickenham, and began the development of a pseudo-Gothic residence, "Strawberry Hill"; established a private press there, where were printed Gray's poems and many other books; remained in Parliament till 1767, but took little part in politics; spent much time in letter-writing; succeeded to the earldom of Orford in 1791; died in London, March 2, 1797. Walpole's writings include: *A Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England*, 1758; *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, 1762-71; *The Castle of Otranto*, 1764; *The Mysterious Mother, a Tragedy*, 1768; besides the hundreds of letters published posthumously.

Walpole's Letters were collected by Peter Cunningham, in eight volumes, 1891; a more complete edition was made by Mrs. Paget Toynbee, in sixteen volumes, 1903-05. *The Castle of Otranto* is most accessible in the reprint in Cassell's National Library. For biography, see Austin Dobson's *Horace Walpole, a Memoir*, 1890. An agreeable selection from the letters, with comments, forms L. B. Seeley's *Horace Walpole and his World*. For criticism, see Macaulay's essay on Walpole, Leslie Stephen's essay in *Hours in a Library*, and (for *The Castle of Otranto*) Beers's *History of Romanticism in the 18th Century*.

JOSEPH WARTON was born at Dunsfold, Surrey, in April, 1722. He went to Winchester School and Oriel College, Oxford (B. A., 1744); entered the church, and was his father's curate; wrote poetry

as a recreation; traveled as chaplain to the Duke of Bolton; became second master at Winchester School, 1755, remaining there till 1793 (head master from 1766); was a friend of Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Burke, and Garrick; retired to Wickham in 1793, where he died February 23, 1800. Warton's works include: *Odes on Various Subjects*, 1746; edition and translation of Virgil, 1753; contributions to Dr. Johnson's *Adventurer*, 1753-56; *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope* (vol. i) 1756 and (vol. ii) 1782; an edition of *Pope's Works*, 1797.

There is no modern edition of the *Essay on Pope*. For biography, see Sidney Lee's article in the D. N. B.; for criticism, an essay on "The Wartons" in John Dennis's *Studies in English Literature*, and Beers's *History of Romanticism in the 18th Century*.

THOMAS WARTON (brother of Joseph Warton) was born at Basingstoke, January 9, 1728. He was educated by his father and at Trinity College, Oxford (B. A., 1747); took orders, but remained at the University as tutor and fellow; wrote poetry as an amateur; studied early English literature with a thoroughness very unusual for his time; was elected Professor of Poetry in 1757, and for ten years lectured on classical topics; in 1785 became Camden Professor of History; was appointed Poet Laureate on the death of Whitehead in 1785, but was unsuccessful as an official poet; died in his college, May 20, 1790. Warton's works include: *Observations on the Fairy Queen of Spenser*, 1754; contributions to Johnson's *Idler*, 1758-59; an edition of Theocritus, 1770; *History of English Poetry*, 1774-81 (never finished); an edition of Milton's minor poems, 1785; and various poems.

There is no modern edition of Warton's *Observations on the Fairy Queen*. For biography and criticism, the references are the same as for Joseph Warton.

GILBERT WHITE was born at Selborne, Hampshire, July 18, 1720. He attended Oriel College, Oxford (B. A., 1743); became a fellow of Oriel; entered the church, 1747, and held various curacies, but apparently never aspired to important livings because of his desire to live at Selborne; resided there continuously until his death, and devoted himself largely to observation as a naturalist; in 1767 became acquainted with the naturalist Pennant, and in 1769 with Barrington, his later letters to these friends forming the nucleus of his *Selborne*; contributed to the transactions of the Royal Society; gradually formed the idea of making a book from his notes and letters; never married, but entertained hospitably at his home; died there on June 26, 1793. White's one book was *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*, 1789.

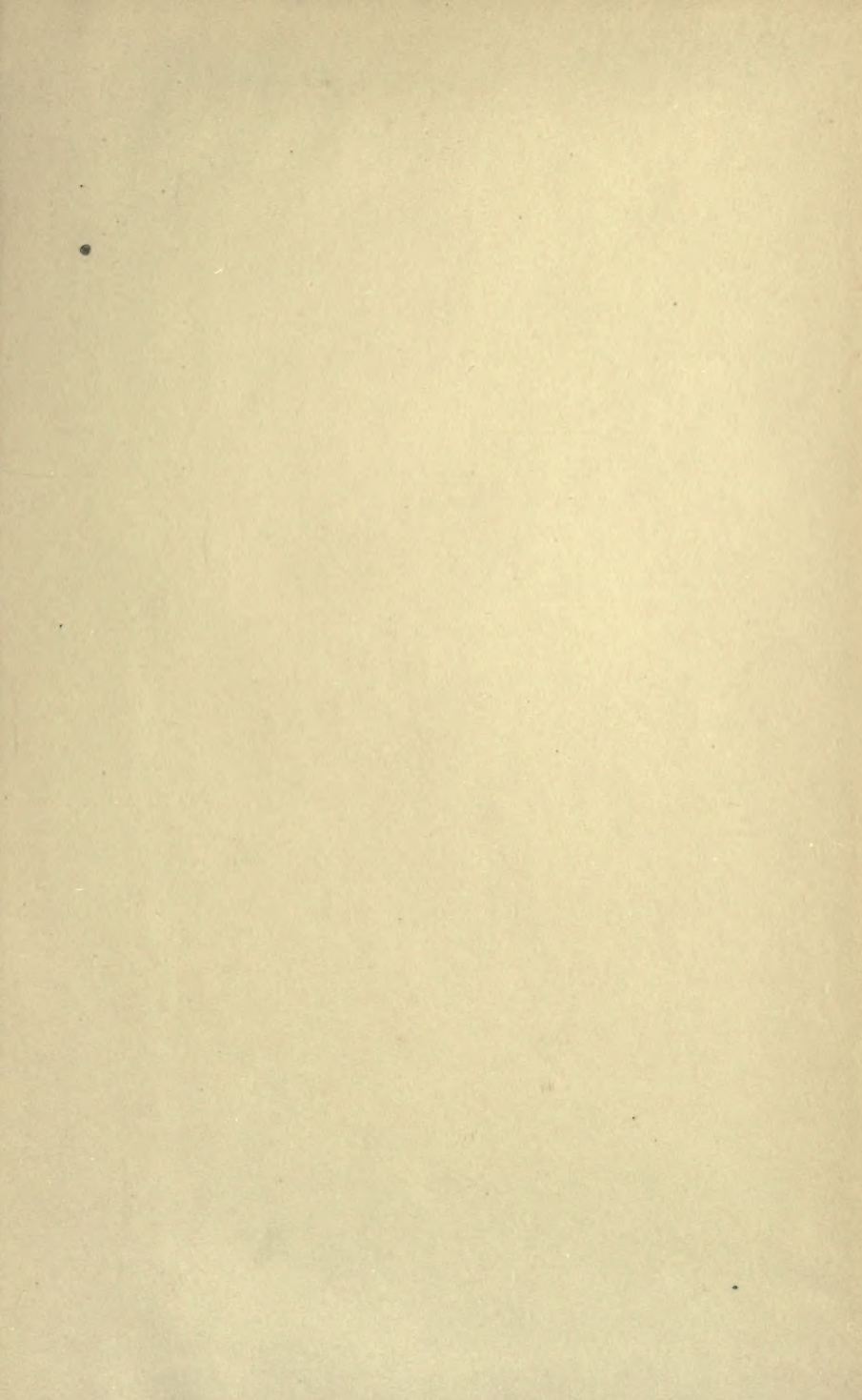
There have been several modern editions of *Selborne*; one of the best is an American reprint with an Introduction by John Burroughs, 1895. The *Life and Letters of Gilbert White of Selborne*, by R. Holt-White, appeared in 1901.



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